I am a mother of two and a second year midwifery student at Australian Catholic University. When I discovered that AHPRA are considering the formation of a Midwifery Board that would be separate to Nursing, I decided that I needed to write a short submission in support of this move.

Although historically considered together, the professions of nursing and midwifery could not be more different. Nurses are primarily employed in supportive roles in medical models of care that are based on therapeutic interventions in pathological disease states. Midwives, however, practice autonomously as primary care givers, and act to support women during physiological processes. Although sometimes necessary, interventions in midwifery are actively avoided, which is something that nurses have little understanding of. It is time that the difference between the two professions is reflected by separate governance.

There is significant lack of midwifery representation on the NMBA, with no representation of midwives who provide continuity of care to women choosing to birth at home or in birth centres. The current NMBA does not have the skill or the capacity to make judgements about midwives, and to safely address safety of the public, as they are unaware of the unique role and scope of the midwife. More voices must be heard, especially those who are experienced in contemporary midwifery practice. It is time that Midwifery had greater visibility and a louder voice.

A Midwifery Board would the third largest Board of registrants and would constitute an adequate workload given the wide variety of midwifery practice. Implementing a Midwifery Board separate from Nursing would be cost effective, economical and would ultimately provide greater protection for midwives and the public. It is time for Midwives to be recognised as the key providers of maternity services and professionals in our own right.

Please support the move for Midwifery to form its own Board – it just makes so much sense!

Best regards,

Calida Fifer