

Australian Human Rights Commission  
Level 3, 175 Pitt Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Friday, 29 November 2019

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Human Rights in Childbirth (HRiC) Submission to *Free & Equal: An Australian Conversation on Human Rights***

We write this letter with the intent of supporting the submission written by Human Rights in Childbirth (HRiC) to *Free & Equal: An Australian Conversation on Human Rights*.

As the peak professional body of the Midwifery profession in Australia, the Australian College of Midwives (ACM) supports HRiCs assertion that women have the right to:

- Have a child or to not have a child;
- Not to be separated from their children;
- Care for their children in accordance with cultural, spiritual and community norms; and
- Control birthing options including choice of care provider, birth companions, treatment options and birth circumstances.

HRiCs submission outlines both the significance and importance of a woman's right to bodily autonomy and human rights throughout the childbearing years. Violations of a woman's rights include but are not limited to:

- Lack of informed consent;
- Direct abuse and disrespect;
- Discriminatory laws and practices;
- Harmful stereotypes;
- Racial profiling;
- Abuse of power;
- Gender bias; and
- Fetal-centric focus.

The impacts of these violations are far-reaching and increasingly associated with physical and psychological trauma. Subsequently, the ACM supports the strategies and steps outlined in HRiCs submission and believe they are key to protecting the reproductive and health rights of all women.

Yours sincerely,



Luke Williamson  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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