

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 - Submission  
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To the Queensland Parliament Health Committee

Re Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018

As a health professional and as someone who has heard accounts of others dealing with post abortion difficulties, I would like to present my submission. More specifically, I would like to address the purposes of the Act.

*Purposes The purposes of this Act are— (a) to enable reasonable and safe access by women to terminations; and (b) to regulate the conduct of registered health practitioners in relation to terminations.*

To arrange an abortion in Queensland generally is a simple and safe process under the current law; few questions asked and no prosecution to follow. Because it is so accessible many women have reactive abortions, that is, they are suddenly confronted with an unexpected “problem” and just need the “problem” to go away. At this stage they are usually highly anxious yet ambivalent and will turn to a sympathetic GP. Of course, abortion is there on the table as part of the problem-solving selection criteria. Often in haste they take the referral for abortion as the most expedient option, whether it agrees with their personal value system or not. However, following the abortion, they then begin to process what just happened. For some grief, anxiety and depression settle in and may be accompanied by suicidal ideation requiring further therapy. For others there is a sense of immediate relief, but for various reasons, they find later in life their decision comes back to haunt them. Some don’t appear to be affected at all.

Though there may be different reasons a woman may ask for or agree to an abortion, there is an overriding awareness that deliberate abortion is the taking of a conceived life, so the decision to do so is not easy for most women. Physically we know that terminations, like any medical or surgical interventions come with short term risks, as well as long term complications such as cervical incompetence, affecting later pregnancies.

Most disagree to using it as a means of convenience for the likes of contraception or gender preferencing. Sadly, this is the way we are progressing and while we live in a disposable world we need to remember that we are not dealing with something of little value or consequence. Governments should be looking for pathways that don’t depend on the need for abortions and the recently proposed Bills are not a step in this direction. Good leadership must avoid enabling irresponsible behaviour and careless choices.

Changing the Act to legalise Abortions will have at least two major effects:

1. Sooner or later there will arise demand for increased Medicare and/or other government subsidies, resources and clinics, which will cause greater financial load on the health system.
2. Secondly, in time, after it becomes *legal* and more financially viable, more socially acceptable and plentiful, a loss of moral conscience for the unborn life will broaden the scope for abuse, not decrease it. The proposed Bill will swing the door wide open to subtly or overtly include more social excuses rather than health concerns.

Health practitioners have a regulatory body that oversees professional conduct to ensure safe practice. Along with the current support of Medicare, there is no need for secret back yard services. The women of Queensland as in other states of Australia can have access to safe terminations so one must ask, how will changing the Act make women safer? It is quite misleading to claim that the purpose of the Act will regulate the conduct of registered health practitioners and enable reasonable and safe access for women to have

abortions.

In addition to the above, I would also like to add that suggesting abortion laws are no longer valid because they are a hundred years old, is not a credible reason for change. Laws against violence, murder, and other injustices are just as necessary today as they were hundreds and even thousands of years ago. Laws are put in place to safe-guard a society against itself.

In conclusion, abortions are costly in more ways than one. Under our current laws women already have access to safe abortions. Few if any are denied or prosecuted. Changing the current law will provide more scope for harm than good and all health practitioners are called to, above all **do no harm**. Therefore, I advocate that the current laws not be changed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission.

Kind Regards

Jennifer Missenden

