

Committee Secretary  
Health, Communities, Disability Services  
and Domestic and Family Violence  
Prevention Committee  
Parliament House  
George St  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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Dear Committee Members,

Who would have thought that Ernest Hemingway's 1920s short story *Hills Like White Elephants* could explain so much about the issue of coercion when it comes to abortion?

The story of a young man and woman discussing an operation while waiting for a train. No mention is made about the girl being pregnant or of abortion. Through the conversation, the man insists the woman have the operation which has nothing to do with her health. He poignantly says "*if you don't want to you don't have to. I wouldn't have you do it if you didn't want to. But I know it's perfectly simple.*" The girl is deeply apprehensive and undoubtedly anxious about the operation despite fraudulently feigning indifference.

Hemingway really shines a light on the *coercion* of abortion. The woman in the story is subtly *coerced into abortion when* she is told that it is purely her *choice*. What the woman really wants to hear is that she and her child will be supported by her partner and society. Instead she hears that the decision to abort her unborn child is her only option and an easy option.

With the proposed Queensland abortion bill, every attempt is made to remove any social objection to abortion, even to the extreme of creating exclusion zones of 150 metres around abortion clinics. These exclusion zones only increase the coercion a woman experiences in the slow walk to the clinic and removes any opportunity for informed choice.

Why? Because these zones remove people who peacefully object to abortion and those who offer the possibility of supported alternatives. These peaceful protesters are not harassing women and are instead giving support that these proposed law changes do not provide. Why do I know this? Because I am a peaceful protester.

My years of peaceful protest have not been to harass women but give them the opportunity to 'pause' and consider their choices before they walk into the abortion

clinic. I stand there to offer support, even support after they have had an abortion. I stand there to let them know about the very real physical and psychological effects of abortion. I want them to realise that the choice is not '*perfectly simple*' as it is in a Hemingway story.

I feel the deep apprehension of women going for an abortion. I have never seen a woman 'happily' walking into an abortion clinic. It would be unusual to experience anger from these women. They are women who do not 'want' an abortion, but feel it is necessary because of their circumstance.

Women going into an abortion clinic have a look of fear on their face. They are women that feel pressured that this 'operation' will solve their immediate problem. At a deeper level I have felt them crying out through their eyes for someone to say, 'everything is going to be ok' and 'we can support you through this'. These women are looking for hope when all they feel is hopelessness.

With proposed 150 m exclusion zones, women will supposedly be protected from encountering women like me approaching them or even praying for them. I am saddened by this prospect. Not because my right to object to abortion has been taken away or that I have committed a crime if I do not abide by this arguably unconstitutional law, but because vulnerable women will have lost an opportunity to encounter someone who says it is not ok to have an abortion.

The restrictions on peaceful protestors is not there to protect women from being harassed. It is instead to protect an industry that exists to make money out of abortions. This action, that denies free speech and the option of peaceful protest, shows the vile desperation of the abortion industry and their spokesperson Deputy Premier Jackie Trad to remove any support or hope for pregnant women on that slow walk to an abortion.

Because of my encounters with women outside abortion clinics, I do not support the *Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018*.

Kind Regards,

Angela Duff