

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee](#)
Subject: Submission - Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018
Date: Tuesday, 4 September 2018 10:59:54 PM

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for your service to our community.

I have grave concerns for women's wellbeing related to the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018. More extreme abortion laws will not be better for Queensland women or families. Research is showing it is not what Queenslanders want.

- Seventy-six percent of Queenslanders believe that abortion can harm the physical and/or mental health of women. There is overwhelming evidence about the serious physical and emotional effects of abortion on women, and as a consequence, on their families. Physical risks include infection, haemorrhage, infertility and breast cancer. Psychological risks include depression and other mental illness, suicide, attempted suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity and general poor self-esteem. (YouGov Galaxy, August 2018)

-According to this poll, 90% of Queenslanders want women considering abortion to receive free independent counselling, and 86 percent want the woman to receive information on the development of the unborn baby, the nature of the procedure, the physical and psychological risks of the operation and the alternatives of keeping the baby or adoption, so they can make a fully informed decision. A **cooling-off period** of several days between making an appointment to have an abortion and the actual procedure is supported by 80% of Queenslanders. And 67% of Queenslanders believe that **parental consent** to abortion should normally be required for girls under the age of 16. **A requirement for mandatory independent counselling from a source not connected with the abortion clinic(who often have a vested interest in the abortion happening) is not in this Bill. As such it does not respect and encourage a woman's right to be properly and ethically informed.** (YouGov Galaxy, August 2018)

I don't know if you are aware - there is clear evidence that up to 1 in 5 women suffer serious prolonged psychological trauma after abortion, such as depression and anxiety. The relief most women experience immediately after an abortion doesn't last (Real Choices Australia – www.realchoices.org.au). Also, after an abortion, women are almost 6 times more likely to commit suicide than women who give birth (British Medical Journal, 1997 – www.bmj.com/content/313/7070/1431).

The facts of abortion need to be disclosed to women so they can have a real way of informed consent. Labor's Bill currently ignores the right of women to know the real risk factors of abortion.

The cry is often that more abortion opportunities =more women's rights. Yes, we need women's rights to be protected. Counselling is essential, to discuss options...and to check there are not financial, relationship or issues that can be resolved with other assistance... these often blur the decision to have an abortion as a "fix". Mandatory counselling should provide information on the risks of abortion which include an increased risk of breast

cancer, mental illness and infertility in the future. Labor's bill is anti-woman as it is allowing abortion on demand with no disclosure of risks such as these.

This Bill also leads to NO protection for the viable late-term babies, or their mothers who, right now, can still claim that late abortions are illegal if they are feeling pressured by others to abort. I know of mothers who missed the current window of time to legally abort, so went on to have their babies, and they are thankful these limits existed.

We heard in Parliament in 2016, Health Minister Cameron Dick admit that 27 "aborted" babies were born alive in 2015, and then left to die. This is dreadful. This clearly shows that there should be a gestational limit to terminations...these babies were ready to live, and a civilised society should not be ending their lives or leaving them to die. We have to find a better way to support our pregnant women and to offer, for example, adoption as a viable option instead of this sort of traumatic experience for everyone involved. Abortion takes a life, and sometimes the future hope for that woman, whereas adoption can be a way through the situation with healing and hope in the future. And have you heard how they do partial-birth abortions? Please do not push for these changes unless you can read about and look at this procedure and say in your heart that this is OK to do another human being.

There is strong evidence that Queenslanders do not want the changes this Bill would bring to abortion in Queensland, and that it is substantially lacking in supporting women's rights in key areas such as mandatory independent counselling re the real risks of the abortion. These proposed changes to the Queensland's current abortion laws means no safeguards for especially vulnerable women (who need facts on the risks, and info on the options) and no safeguards for babies ready to live(who need the option of adoption offered to their mothers).

Thank you for giving this very serious issue your time and consideration. Please look at the health evidence, and the risks of this Bill. Your committee holds the future of many lives in your hands.

Yours sincerely,
Kerri-Ann Caswell.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]