The Preamble to the Australian Constitution contains the words, "Humly relying on the blessing of Almighty God". As Australian citizens we continue to declare that we too put our trust in Almighty God.

For centuries, to speak of Western civilisation was to speak of Christian civilisation. The two were in many ways synonymous. The values that we have cherished and sought to strengthen are in large measure founded on the Judeo-Christian belief system. The many freedoms, advantages, opportunities, values and liberties which characterise the West owe much to the growth of Christianity with its inherent belief in the dignity of the human person as created in the image of God and the code of behaviour that flows from this belief.

The Canberra Declaration follows on from the 2009 Manhattan Declaration and the 2010 Westminster Declaration. It declares that when Christian values are respected and allowed freedom of expression, not just confined to so-called sacred spaces but in the public arena as well, society is richer and healthier.

We wish to emphasise three areas that demand particular attention in our contemporary Australian society, namely religious freedom, marriage and the family, and the sanctity of human life. We are to undermine any one of these values, the social fabric of our nation would be seriously weakened, to our personal and collective detriment.

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom includes freedom of conscience and freedom of speech. The importance of these freedoms is shown in countries where they are threatened or absent. Police states and totalitarian nations inevitably begin with the curtailment of basic liberties, including religious freedom and the right to speak one’s mind and conscience. This includes the right to change one's religious beliefs.

We affirm the basic necessity of freedom of conscience, having the liberty to speak publicly about one's faith and beliefs, and having the right to practice the religion of one's choice. If these freedoms are removed - even in the name of supposed benefits - the prized values of democracy and liberty are seriously undermined.

Marriage and Family

Another vital package of values and social benefits is the long-standing institution of the natural family resulting from marriage between a man and a woman - as affirmed by the definition of marriage in the Marriage Act: "...the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life".

No other social institution has done so much good for people and for nations, yet marriage is being undermined, to the detriment of children, individuals, and society itself.

Human Life

The third important set of values revolves around the sanctity of human life which is being undermined in much of the Western world, through abortion, euthanasia, and some of the new reproductive technologies.

We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life's natural end.

The very heart of a humane and civilised society is based on the way it treats its most vulnerable and innocent members including the unborn and the disabled. We therefore insist on the right of all persons, including those who are vulnerable or dependent, to protection from conception to natural death. We will support, protect, and be advocates for such people, since to do anything less is to weaken our humanity and despise our personhood.

We will not comply with any directive that compels us to participate in or facilitate abortion, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide, euthanasia, or any other act that involves the intentional taking of innocent human life.

Conclusion

Religious freedom, marriage and family, and the sacredness of human life have provided the foundations enabling Western democratic societies to flourish. We erode these foundations at our peril.

The faith which is at the heart of many of the values and strengths underpinning the Australian nation now compels us to speak up in their defence.

For the future of this nation, and for our children's future, we call upon all like-minded citizens to support and sign this declaration.

For further information contact:
Canberra Declaration, c/- Australian Christian Values Institute,
PO Box 378 Unanderra NSW 2526 P: (02) 4272 9100
Fax: 4272 4001 E: info@canberradeclaration.org.au
www.canberradeclaration.org.au
Canberra Declaration
SIGN to Protect Life, Marriage & Family and Religious Liberty in Australia

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

We the concerned citizens of Australia support the Canberra Declaration and have signed the below petition in support of freedom, life, marriage, family and our children. We maintain that the values that have made this nation great include the protection and valuing of life, the supporting and defending of marriage between a man and a woman as the foundation upon which a healthy society is built, the securing and defending of religious freedom and the safeguarding of our children. These values are being undermined on many fronts by many opponents, who we believe do not have the best interests of our nation or our children at heart. For this reason we ask the House and the Government to defend and create legislation and policy that protects life, protects and strengthens marriage, protects and supports the natural family, protects religious freedom and protects our children.

This petition meets the Parliamentary website requirements. This form and the information on this form will be submitted to Parliamentarians and the Parliament, at Federal and State level, to indicate your support of the Canberra Declaration, its legislative actions and its principles. Details will also be retained to update you on the progress of the Canberra Declaration and related issues.

*Email (or phone or mobile) will be used to update you on our progress. You can opt out at anytime. We will not share your information with anyone except for necessary Parliamentary process.

**POST to:** Canberra Declaration,
c/- Australian Christian Values Institute,
PO Box 378 Unanderra NSW 2526

**FAX to:** (02) 4272 4001

**CONTACT:** P: (02) 4272 9100
E: info@canberradeclaration.org.au
www.canberradeclaration.org.au

**DONATE $5:** P: (02) 4272 9100
www.canberradeclaration.org.au
HELP WITH SUBMISSION COSTS

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*Email is IMPORTANT for updates
Once again we see that unborn babies are real persons with real emotions. But very sadly the abortion industry convinces many people to think otherwise.

**What is the Answer?** – Some have claimed that abortion is the defining moral issue of our day. With an estimated 42 million unborn babies aborted each year in the world it is undeniably a huge modern-day phenomenon. What is the answer to this global problem?

In God’s eyes the shedding of innocent human blood is sin. The problem of abortion cannot be solved by legislation. It can only really be solved when people confess their sin and turn to God for the answer that is found in Jesus.

**Pray for the Unborns** – Mother Teresa asserts that “the child is God’s gift to the family and each child is created in the special image and likeness of God for greater things, to love and be loved”. But negatively she insisted “the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion because if a mother can kill her own child, what is left for me to kill you and you to kill me? There is nothing in between”.

How do you respond to the abortion of 100,000 Australian unborn babies each year, knowing each is made in the image and likeness of God and precious to Him?

Such a massive shedding of innocent blood warrants a response. We may not have all the answers but we can pray!

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**About ‘Image of God’ Leaflets**

In the Bible we read that God “created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27). Many maintain that all human history revolves around this truth. The Judeo-Christian belief in the unique dignity of human beings is at the very foundation of Western civilisation.

The 2010 Canberra Declaration therefore states:

“We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life’s natural end.”

‘Image of God’ leaflets relate the doctrine of man as created in the image of God to various issues we face in Australia today.

You can download other ‘Image of God’ leaflets from the Canberra Declaration website.

Please:

Read & Sign the Canberra Declaration to Protect

- Religious Freedom
- Marriage and Family and
- Human Life
in Australia

Website: [www.canberradeclaration.org.au](http://www.canberradeclaration.org.au)

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With each new discovery, modern science continues to astound us with the sublime complexity and beauty of human life. And so the modern-day claim that a newly conceived unborn baby is merely a ‘ball of cells’ or a patch of ‘foetal tissue’ or a small ‘blob’ is not good science! This attempt to devalue and dehumanise unborn babies does not recognise that a human life comes into being at conception. The Rev Dr John Stott writes in ‘Issues Facing Christians Today’ that the fertilized ovum is a physical structure with the richest and most strangely mysterious repertoire known to man, for it can develop into the embodiment of a new human being in the image of God, loved by God, replete with potentialities of not merely earthly but eternal significance.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made – Many centuries ago a man named Job said to God, “Your hands shaped me and made me … you moulded me like clay … knit me together with bones and sinews … you gave me life … watched over my spirit” (Job 10:8-12). David in one of his psalms expressed similar thoughts to God saying, “You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made … my frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place” (Psalm 139:13-15). Job and David were created as physical and spiritual beings. They marvelled at how God was involved in the way they took shape in their mothers' wombs. The same is true of every unborn baby today. Each is in the process of being fearfully and wonderfully made by a loving God!

Each in the Image and Likeness of God – The Bible states that “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27a). Sadly, because sin entered the human race through Adam and Eve, the image of God in mankind was marred and tarnished. Today, the lives of many unborn babies are deliberately ended by abortion. This is mostly for reasons of convenience but sometimes it is because of real or suspected abnormalities picked up in ultra-sound screening. Yet so many are blind to the reality that even unborn babies with abnormalities are equally as precious to God as other babies. Every human life is made in the image and likeness of God and has intrinsic and equal value in the eyes of God and needs to be protected.

Known in Eternity – God said to the prophet Jeremiah “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart …” (Jeremiah 1:5). As with Jeremiah, God who dwells in eternity knows each person long before he or she is born or even conceived. John the Baptist, for example, was conceived after the angel told his father Zechariah that his barren wife Elizabeth would bear him a son who would become his joy and delight” (Luke 1:11-14, 23-24). That God knows every unborn baby is a staggering thought. He has eternal plans for each one.

With Child – In the Bible we read of a number of pregnant women who are said to be “with child”. For example, Jesus’ mother “Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18). Because Mary wasn’t married at the time, she came under much social pressure. But she knew the child within her was from God.

Many young women today find themselves ‘with child’ in difficult circumstances and are under pressure to have an abortion. They too can find strength in God to preserve the lives of their babies, knowing that they are precious in God’s sight.

Interaction of Unborns – During Rebekah’s pregnancy with twins “the babies jostled each other within her” (Genesis 25:21). She had become pregnant with Jacob and Esau in God’s answer to the prayer of her husband Isaac. The prophet Hosea later says of Jacob, “In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel” (Hosea 12:3). Why all this pre-natal wrestling and jostling? God said that it was because the twins would become two nations.

A much happier example of two unborns interacting is the example of the newly-conceived Jesus and his cousin John (the Baptist) who was in his sixth month. At that time John’s mother Elizabeth said to Mary “as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy” (Luke 1:44).
Considering an abortion?

What are your options?

What are the risks?
Introduction

This booklet presents information for women or couples facing a pregnancy which presents serious difficulties. It is your right to be given factual information on all the available options. These options include continuing with the pregnancy, with parenting or adoption as your choices, or a legal abortion. This information should be carefully considered before making a decision.

Information about pregnancy counselling services and services which provide assistance through pregnancy is included.

For women who decide to take up the responsibilities of parenthood and require assistance, suggestions about finding helping agencies are included. Should circumstances prevent you from caring for a child yourself, then adoption is an option to be considered.

ACT law sets out the grounds under which abortions are permitted. These are outlined for your information.

This booklet also includes the information on medical risks of abortion and of carrying a pregnancy to term which was approved by the Advisory Panel on Abortion Information under section 8 of the Health Regulation (Maternal Health Information) Act 1998, as well as further information on foetal development approved under the Maternal Health Information Regulations 1999.

Do not feel pressured into making a rushed decision. It is too important.

Making Your Decisions

Women experience a whole range of feelings when they find out they are pregnant. They may feel excited, confident, fulfilled, anxious, frightened, guilty, angry, trapped, out of control. All these feelings are natural and normal. These feelings, depending on your individual circumstances, may vary from hour to hour and often make it hard to make decisions for the future. It is important to think for a few days and not to go with your first feelings.

Most people find it helpful to talk to others about how they are feeling and their future plans. Some relationships change dramatically with the knowledge of a pregnancy. Think carefully about sharing your concerns. It is important that you choose someone whom you trust and who will really listen to what you are saying. Your family, partner or special friends may be helpful. However, you do not have to tell your partner. Many people like to talk with a counsellor, doctor or health worker. Because they are not so close to you they can help you consider all the alternatives. They can strengthen you in your decision making. In the end it is really important that you make up your own mind what you want to do.

You can make a decision to continue your pregnancy or seek a termination under medical supervision. You can listen to other people's advice but you should not let them make a decision for you.

Here are some questions you may want to think about:

- what is it like to have and care for a baby?
- what is it like to give a baby up for adoption?
- what is it like to have a termination of pregnancy? What stage has the pregnancy reached?
- what are the medical risks of termination under medical supervision and of carrying a pregnancy to term?
- what effect will the different options have on my relationships within and outside my family?
- how will the different options affect my education, career and financial situation?
- are there spiritual issues I need to consider?
Continuing your pregnancy

There are two alternatives if you continue your pregnancy:

- parenting your child
- adoption

If you are going to continue your pregnancy you will need to arrange health care for yourself and your baby. Financial, emotional and practical help is also available. Ask your doctor, midwife or Centrelink Service about this.

Parenting your child

You may decide to parent your child with the help of your partner or family, or you may decide to bring up your child yourself. Centrelink can give you details of available financial benefits or contact one of the helping agencies listed in this booklet.

Adoption

When a child is adopted, the rights and responsibilities of parenting are given legally by the birth parent(s) to the adoptive parents and the adoptive parents' names appear on the birth certificate.

You can ask a counsellor or a hospital social worker for a referral to the Adoptions Coordinator at ACT Family Services.

Abortion

ACT law permits termination of pregnancy under medical supervision in an approved facility if a doctor is satisfied that your life or physical or mental health is in serious danger from carrying on the pregnancy. A medical practitioner must have provided you with approved information at least 72 hours before the abortion is performed. This information is contained on pages 8, 9 and 10 of this booklet.

Some women, even though they wish to be pregnant, may consider a termination of pregnancy under medical supervision if the foetus has severe abnormalities and may not survive beyond childbirth or may be severely disabled.

Those who end up most happy with the decision they made are the ones who thought really carefully about all the alternatives and who were not pressured into a decision by someone else.

You have time to make your own decisions. However, the safest time to end a pregnancy is within the first twelve to thirteen weeks. In the first instance, you should approach a doctor, who can refer you to counselling to give you more time to talk and decide. Counsellors are usually available at family planning clinics, abortion clinics, schools, universities and TAFEs, churches and private counselling rooms. Some specific agencies are listed at the back of this booklet. If your doctor will not arrange for you to see a counsellor or refer you to an abortion facility, you should be referred to another doctor who will make the necessary arrangements.
The Law and Abortion

The law relating to abortion in the Australian Capital Territory is covered by the Crimes Act 1900 and the Health Regulation (Maternal Health Information) Act 1998.

An abortion is legal if a doctor is satisfied that your life or physical or mental health is in serious danger from carrying on the pregnancy.

If you meet these criteria and you seek an abortion, a medical practitioner must provide you with approved information about abortion. You and your doctor must sign a certificate confirming that you have been provided with information and referrals for counselling if you want it. Before the abortion can be performed you must wait 72 hours and then sign a consent form for medical treatment.

An abortion can only be performed in an approved facility by a registered medical practitioner.

Your medical advice and treatment

The obligations placed on doctors who assist you with pregnancy or abortion are extensive and are aimed at protecting your rights and health.

The giving of medical advice is governed by ACT legislation and by rulings of the courts. Recent court rulings make it very clear that doctors have a wide-ranging responsibility to provide you with all possible information about this or any other medical procedure.

There is considerable public debate about the medical and psychological risks of abortions. The advice in this booklet provides a good overview of this debate and by law this advice must be provided to you before an abortion can be performed.

However, giving you a copy of this booklet is only a part of your doctor's obligations. A medical practitioner who assists you must provide you with advice on all medical risks confronting you in your personal circumstances. Be sure to insist that your doctor provides you with the highest possible standard of care and advice based upon your own individual circumstances.

You also have rights under ACT law to access to your medical records and to protect your right to privacy.

The ACT has a Community and Health Services Complaints Commissioner to assist you if you encounter any difficulties with your medical support.

Conscientious objection

Under the Health Regulation (Maternal Health Information) Act 1998 doctors and counsellors who have a conscientious objection to the practice of abortion are not obliged to provide you with information or complete any documentation. If your doctor does not wish to assist you with an abortion you can see another doctor.
What does the procedure involve?

Termination of pregnancy under 12 weeks of pregnancy is carried out by dilatation of the cervix and vacuum suction. The procedure itself usually takes about 15 minutes. It can be done under general anaesthetic or local anaesthetic, with or without sedation.

From around 14 weeks the method will vary, depending on the number of weeks of pregnancy and on medical circumstances. It usually involves softening of the cervix by use of drugs, followed by a process similar to that used in the first trimester. In later pregnancies, induction of labour may be required.

What are the chances of complications?

Available evidence indicates that a termination of pregnancy under medical supervision is a low risk procedure, particularly if undertaken by vacuum suction prior to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

The risk of complications increases with each week of pregnancy after 7 weeks of pregnancy; however, the risks continue to be small.

The risks associated with the use of general anaesthetic are also small. Factors that may increase these risks are obesity, smoking, diabetes and other chronic illnesses. Local anaesthetic reduces the risks even further.

The overall risk of experiencing a complication during or soon after a termination of pregnancy under medical supervision has been estimated at nine women in 1,000.

What are the possible immediate complications?

After a termination under medical supervision, only a small percentage of women will experience complications requiring medical care. The most usual reasons for this are:
- excessive blood loss often associated with cramping pain
- pelvic infection, usually treated by antibiotics
- incomplete abortion, sometimes requiring another procedure

The majority of these complications are easily treatable.

There are other extremely rare, more serious complications such as perforation of the uterus, the possible development of blood group incompatibility (Rh disease) and pulmonary embolism (clots to the lung).

In general, all these risks are increased if the termination is performed at or after 14 weeks of pregnancy. Sometimes the drugs associated with later terminations can give rise to pain and/or nausea.

In Australia, maternal deaths after termination of pregnancy under medical supervision are extremely rare (no deaths reported between 1989 and 1993).

What are the possible longer term complications?

The weight of evidence tells us that a single termination under medical supervision, carried out under proper conditions, does not increase the risk of infertility, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, spontaneous miscarriage, preterm labour, low birth weight or breast cancer. The risk to future fertility after repeated terminations remains less clear.

The majority of women will not experience serious emotional consequences following a termination under medical supervision. Short-term feelings of guilt, regret, anxiety, depression and sadness may occur. These are generally mild and self-limiting and may last a few weeks or months.
A small number of women may experience more serious emotional problems. These are most likely to be women whose wanted pregnancy is terminated due to foetal abnormalities and those who were pressured into the termination by others.

There are also complications associated with making a decision to continue with a pregnancy. In fact, the risk of complications in pregnancy is higher than the risk for a termination under medical supervision.

**What are the chances of complications in pregnancy?**

Close to one in five women in western countries are hospitalised for minor and major complications of pregnancy prior to delivery. The major reasons for hospitalisation include: preterm labour, spontaneous miscarriage, pelvic and urinary tract infections, bleeding, vomiting, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Infection following birth occurs in up to 3 per cent of deliveries and in 10-50 percent of caesarean sections. Many women experience some form of postnatal depression. Other postnatal problems are urinary tract infections, haemorrhoids, clots and tenderness of veins.

A very small number of women die as a result of childbirth in Australia. The main causes of death in full-term pregnancies are pulmonary embolism (clots to the lung), high blood pressure and haemorrhage.

In addition, there is a small risk that some babies may be born with significant health problems.

**How soon can I get pregnant after an abortion?**

A woman can become pregnant the first time she has intercourse after a termination of pregnancy. You may wish to discuss contraceptive options with a practitioner before having unprotected sex for the first time after a termination.

**Follow-up care**

Following a termination under medical supervision, the woman is observed for a few hours to check that bleeding and discomfort are within normal limits. She is given follow-up instructions, including what to expect and who to contact if complications occur. Contraceptive options can be discussed at this time. A follow-up visit in 2-4 weeks is very important to check if there are any problems. The follow-up visit is also another chance to discuss the best type of contraception or if more counselling is needed.

**Foetal development**

*This information has been approved under the Maternal Health Information Regulations 1999.*

Development begins on the day of fertilisation, which is usually two weeks after the start of the last menstrual period (LMP). The conventional method of measuring the age of a foetus is the number of weeks since the start of the last menstrual period. The sizes and weights of the embryo/foetus are approximate only and can vary.

**4 weeks**

At the first missed period the embryo is about the size of an apple seed (0.25 cm).

**8 weeks**

At the second missed period the embryo is about 1.2 cm long. The heart has been beating for more than two weeks and limbs are beginning to develop.
10 weeks
The foetus is now about 3 cm long and weighs about 15 grams. Arms, legs, fingers and toes are developing.

12 weeks
The foetus is about 6 cm from head to rump and weighs about 30 grams. The heartbeat can be detected electronically. All major body organs have begun to develop. The foetus begins small movements that cannot yet be felt by the mother.

14 weeks
The foetus is about 8-9 cm from head to rump and weighs about 45 grams. The foetus is able to swallow and the kidneys are able to make urine.

16 weeks
The foetus is about 12 cm, the legs are developed and the weight is about 100 grams.

18 weeks
The foetus is about 14 cm long and is able to respond to sound.
Karin ya Hou se for Mothers and Babies

Karin ya House offers information, counselling and referral for pregnant women, including those in need of supported accommodation, general health and welfare services. It also provides outreach support services. Their telephone number is (02) 6259 8998. It is answered seven days a week from 9am-10pm.

Arranging for adoption

Information on adoption can be obtained from the Adoption Unit (part of ACT Family Services). A staff member may be contacted by telephone on (02) 6207 1080. Alternatively, your pregnancy counsellor or hospital social workers should be able to put you in touch with adoption agencies.

Family Planning

Most general practitioners can provide initial advice and referrals regarding family planning and abortion services.

Family Planning Association ACT Inc

The Association's Pregnancy Information and Counselling Service provides confidential pregnancy information and counselling in addition to an abortion referral service and a wide range of contraceptive choices, information and advice. For information and appointments phone (02) 6248 6222.

Commissioner for Health Complaints

If you have a complaint about the information or treatment which you received from a doctor, you can contact the ACT Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner on (02) 6205 2222.

Other Useful Agencies

You could find more counselling agencies by contacting the Community Information and Referral Service. Look for the number in your telephone book. Your local hospital social work department should also be able to make some suggestions.

The following agencies provide a referral service, putting women in touch with appropriate counsellors—

- Schools
- Universities
- Abortion clinics
- Private counsellors
- Colleges
- CITs
- Churches

The following may also be useful contacts for you

- Anglicare (02) 62480811
- Centacare (02) 62397700
- Centrelink 132880

If you need interpreting help, telephone:

- ENGLISH
- ARABIC
- CHINESE
- CROATIAN
- GREEK
- ITALIAN
- PERSIAN
- PORTUGUESE
- SERBIAN
- SPANISH
- TURKISH
- VIETNAMESE

If you need interpreting help, telephone:

- TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETER SERVICE 131 450
  Canberra and District - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  HEALTH CARE INTERPRETERS 6205 3333
The ACT Department of Health and Community Care gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the New Zealand Ministry of Health and the Health Department of Western Australia in allowing the Advisory Panel to incorporate parts of the following information materials in preparation of this booklet for ACT use:

New Zealand: Considering an Abortion? What are your options? (September 1998)

Western Australia: Medical Risk of Induced Abortion and of Carrying a Pregnancy to Term, and in particular, the accompanying SUMMARY INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR WOMEN

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