

To whom it may concern,

I write to make a submission to the 'Inquiry into laws governing termination of pregnancy in Queensland'. To do so I would like to present a few facts while posing some questions.

Let me start at the beginning. Once an egg is fertilised, a chemical/hormonal switch is activated which results in mitotic cell division. After several stages (in name only), a fetus is present within the uterine cavity. And this is where the current controversy resides.

My wife and I had to go down the IVF pathway in order to have children. While this is a difficult and challenging route, one of the advantages is that you have early confirmation of a positive pregnancy. We were able to attend our doctor's surgery two weeks after receiving a positive blood test to undergo an initial ultrasound scan. On the screen, with magnification, we saw what looked like a grey jellybean. What impacted us most of all, was that we could see a pulsating white dot. We were told by the doctor that even at this early stage, there was the presence of a strong heartbeat an age d that this in fact was the heart.

The four vital signs of life according to Answers.com are: respiration, pulse, warmth and reaction.ⁱ Here, before us was evidence of life! Also, according to Study.com, there are eight biological characteristics of life. Namely: cellular organisation, reproduction, metabolism, homeostasis, heredity, response to stimuli, growth and development, and adaption through evolution.ⁱⁱ These are defined and discussed in the attachment at the conclusion of this submission. Among other things, t arehe simple fact that here was mitotic cell division and growth showed life, and a strong heartbeat according to both the signs and characteristics listed, this embryo (which eventually becomes a fetus) can be classified as alive!

There is a verse in the Bible which states, "You formed my inward parts (knit me together)...in my mother's womb...I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:13-14) When you are knitting a jumper and are asked, "What is that?" The answer isn't, "A bunch of wool that's knotted together". You call it for what it is, "A jumper".

In the same way, a fetus is not a lump/bunch of tissue. It is a living, unborn child. This is a life at its most sensitive and vulnerable. Yet proposed legislation would say that it will "protect vulnerable Queensland women and doctors".ⁱⁱⁱ My question to you is, 'Where is the protection for the most vulnerable in our society - the unborn child?'

The standard procedure used in Australia for any type of abortion is 'Dilation and Curettage with Suction'. Where the cranium has grown too large to fit through the cervix, the limbs and appendages are firstly severed and removed individually, then polyp forceps (see attachment) are used to crush the cranium after which the remaining fragments are evacuated.^{iv} Images are too graphic to show, but above is shown a 12 week old fetus, so you know what it looks like in its entirety. I request and challenge the committee to watch a you-tube movie entitled 'The Silent Scream' which explains, demonstrates and shows an abortion being performed under ultrasound imaging [REDACTED] which in fact shows that the unborn child in addition to having a heartbeat is fully responsive to stimuli, confirming yet another characteristic of life. If this legislation is passed, it is tantamount to condoning and supporting murder of the unborn life. Another question to pose is: 'In what other circumstance is murder ethical? We aren't at war, are we?'

Furthermore, I suffer from advanced Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I can't stand, I can't lift my arms, I can't grasp a pen, knife or fork. And I cannot even feed myself which raises my blood pressure in the light of this legislation, if it is passed. There was a group gathered under a flag 75 years ago which was red with a white circle and a bent, out of shape black 'cross' who became infamous for eliminating 'inferior', disabled and numerous other minority groups ^v including certain groups of children who had no voice ^{vi} (the only difference being that these children were post-natal). And brought the entire world to war. I am part of that vulnerable population and I feel that if we begin to head down the slippery slope of allowing the elimination of 'inconvenient' children whether they be born or before they are born without remorse or hesitation, I am forced to ask the question, "When will I need to start looking over my shoulder?"

In the R v Bayliss case of 1986, Justice McGuire found that only in cases of "exceptional danger to the mother's life or her physical or mental health" should abortion take place. And yet, it has now progressed to court cases being dismissed after only one hour (e.g. the 2009-10 case in Cairns involving RU486). The findings of legal procedures 20 years before fixed certain constraints to ensure ethical terminations but have since been watered down to the point that it is seen as a woman's right to eliminate something which she and her doctor feel is inconvenient. No longer does it seem, a need to prove 'exceptional circumstances' exists.

It seems that our society's perception of life and its value has become so bent out of shape that I now fear the future - that what was found to be abhorrent 75 years ago, is now becoming acceptable. And if this becomes acceptable in years to come, how long before other things also become acceptable? Which leads me to another question that needs to be asked as a result 'Is there any justification in the destruction and killing of innocent unborn children?'

As a result, it is important that we do not allow those who wish to drive the progression of societal expectations and standards to do so. Especially when it involves someone who has no voice (the unborn child). They say, “(The laws that give constraints) have no place in modern society where women should always have control over their own bodies”^{vii}... “(They) are archaic, outdated and have no place in a modern liberal democracy”^{viii} on the contrary, as a humane, nurturing, social society which cares for its most vulnerable citizens this is not acceptable.

As far as alternatives go, I see three;

1) Maybe the first alternative addresses the comment that “when a young woman is not ready to have a child and chooses to terminate a pregnancy, that should be a matter for her and her medical practitioner not a matter for the state”^{ix} in many cases nowadays, I believe that the expression, “Just say ‘NO’” is appropriate.

I understand that there are cases of financial hardship, failed contraception and rape etc where pregnancy has not been chosen. It may be the result of hardship within the family or crime committed against an innocent woman. But in many cases nowadays, pregnancy is a negative outcome resulting from choices that have been taken. The game was played, the cards were dealt but the hand was more than expected (many think, ‘It will never happen to me’). So where to now? I am sure that in many cases, they would say that they wished that they had never played in the first place.

2) Let the child live and place it in adoption. My brother and sister in law wanted to adopt but found that it was extremely difficult since there are not many children available for adoption in the State of Queensland. Their understanding is that there is a large disparity between numbers of people wanting to adopt and children available for adoption. Their observation was that there may be more chance in other states but you need to live within that state before you are considered. As a result, they went as far as Taiwan to adopt. And now, they are most content as a family.

3) Support those couples that wish to keep the child.

Recommendations:

1. Education of teenagers should become more informative, and these information sessions may need to be more in-your-face, so that both **male** and **female** are present to learn of the brevity of their decisions.. Presentations such as the you-tube clip provided (‘The Silent Scream’) or footage showing a living unborn child in-utero should be shown so that they get a picture of what they are eliminating. Footage such as [REDACTED] Let young people know the consequences and the reality when they needlessly say, “Yes” without thought.

2. A review should be urgently conducted into why the process of adoption in Queensland is so difficult and then the red-tape should be removed. There are many couples unable to have children who would gladly accept the opportunity to take one of these children and love them. There have been many cases where an adopted child years later searched for their biological mother. Found them, met them, and hugged them only to say, "Thank you for not aborting me". When they get a voice, we find that they truly *are* thankful to be alive!
3. Improved support for women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant. This could include independent organisations such as Lifeline, the Salvation Army, St Vincent DePaul etc. You would also find that churches or church groups would be willing to provide prenatal care for unexpectedly expectant mothers. This may require additional funding from the state government, but my question is: 'What value do you place on life?' Think about how much you value your life. We pump millions of dollars into health care. At what cost will our society suffer if these laws are in fact passed.
4. Financial counselling should be made available to those people who feel there is no other alternative but who want to keep the child.
5. Counselling should be made mandatory before any abortion takes place, not just for the woman, but also for the man if in fact abortion is felt necessary. They should understand **exactly** what is entailed. Often it is due to the pressure from the male that forces a woman into a corner. In these cases, let the man **see** what he is doing.

So I would like to place on record my opposition to any amendment proposed in parliament regarding any laws relating to abortion. The draft legislation 'Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill' 2016 and any amendments to the criminal code concerning abortion should be thrown out. Please read my submission, view the footage provided, consider it and may the MPs of our parliament come together, realise the danger of this legislation, and turn it down.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.



Dr Mark Elvery BDMSc, BDSt

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Attachment to Submission

1. **Respiration** - the act by which oxygen is conveyed to tissues and cells, and the oxidation products, carbon dioxide and water, are given off. In postnatal bodies, this is achieved by inhalation and exhalation. In the uterus this is achieved when oxygen is passed across the placental barrier. So in a sense, the fetus piggybacks the respiratory system of the mother.
2. **Pulse** - the movement of blood around the body (circulation) is achieved by the successive contractions of the heart. But instead of pumping blood to the lungs as done postnatally the blood is pumped to the placenta for oxygen transfer.
3. **Warmth** - results as a byproduct of metabolism. No process is 100% efficient, hence heat is generated as a waste product. Muscles contract and a portion of the energy is wasted as heat and all biochemical reactions in the body likewise generate heat as a byproduct. And these processes do not occur in bodies unless there is life.
4. **Cellular Organisation** - how many different types of cells are present in an eye? An example of high organisation. Less specialized cell types become more specialized during pregnancy. Differentiation occurs during the development of a fetus and as it changes from a simple zygote to a complex system of tissues and cell types, these are known as firstly a blastocyst and then an embryo and finally is known as a fetus.
5. **Reproduction** - a zygote/embryo have all the information necessary for differentiation and reproduction at later times throughout its life and development.
6. **Metabolism** - the process of converting basic amino acids, proteins, sugar chains etc while replicating DNA and cells continues at a phenomenal rate to provide the growth seen during pregnancy.
7. **Homeostasis** - A characteristic of a system that regulates its internal environment and tends to maintain a stable, relatively constant condition of properties.^x In the case of a fetus, hormones are produced to ensure a stable condition is maintained by preventing the mother's body from rejecting it.
8. **Heredity** - 'is the passing of traits from parents to their offspring, either through asexual reproduction or sexual reproduction. This is the process by which an offspring cell or organism acquires or becomes predisposed to the characteristics of its parent cell or organism.'^{xi} The process of heredity is repeated again and again in the pre-natal environment during growth of the fetus.
9. **Response to Stimuli** – (1) A detectable change in the internal or external environment (2) That which influences or causes a temporary increase of physiological activity or response in the whole organism or in any of its parts (3) That which can evoke a response or has an influence on a system to act.^{xii} These were three definitions which show that the presence of a suction curette results in response as shown in the You-tube movie provided 'The Silent Scream' as just another confirmation of life.

10. **Growth and Development** - signify changes in a particular organism in different aspects^{xiii} There are major changes between a zygote and embryo and new born baby.
11. **Adaption through Evolution** - is the process by which an animal or plant species becomes fitted to its environment. A more accurate way of describing it is microevolution the organism does not cross the species divide, but traits become more common. This is also potentially possible in utero.
12. **Polyp Forceps**, otherwise known as ring forceps are used. Single tooth tenaculum or Jacobs tenaculum.

Citations

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- i [http://www.answers.com/Q/What are the 4 signs of life#slide=2](http://www.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_4_signs_of_life#slide=2) Search conducted 14/6/2016
 - ii <http://study.com/academy/lesson/8-characteristics-of-life-in-biology.html> Search conducted 14/6/2016
 - iii Explanatory notes accompanying draft legislation 'Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill' 2016
 - iv http://em_age_edicine.medscape.com/article/1848296-overview Search conducted 14/6/2016
 - v http://www.theholocaustexplained.org/ks3/life-in-nazi-occupied-europe/non-jewish-minorities/disabled/#.VZNbt94_M Search conducted 15/6/2016
 - vi https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children_in_the_Holocaust Search conducted 15/6/2016
 - vii Explanatory notes accompanying draft legislation 'Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill' 2016
 - viii Explanatory notes accompanying draft legislation 'Abortion Law Reform (WOMEN'S Right to Choose) Amendment Bill' 2016
 - ix Speech by Mr Pyne MP (Independent member for Cairns) to introduce legislation: 'Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill' 10/5/2016
 - x <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-homeostasis-definition-examples-quiz.html> Search conducted 18/6/2016
 - xi <https://www.google.com.au/search?q=what+does+heredity+mean+in+biology&oq=What+does+heredity+mean+in+biology&ags=chrome.0.0.14697j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> Search conducted 19/6/2016
 - xii <http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Stimulus> Search conducted 19/6/2016
 - xiii <http://www.differencebetween.net/science/biology-science/differences-between-growth-and-development-in-biology/> Search conducted 19/6/2016