

To the members of the Committee,

The members of the Sunshine Coast Branch of Cherish Life Queensland Inc. wish to express their strong opposition to the proposed decriminalisation of abortion in Queensland.

This is a most horrific piece of legislation – shocking in its extreme disregard for both the dignity of the unborn child and the wellbeing of the mother. There are no restrictions at all in the legislation – no limitations on the stage of development at which this is to be performed, the manner in which the procedure is to be performed and no protection for any medical professionals to follow their consciences. This bill opens the way to late – term and even partial - birth abortions.

We ask the members of the committee to consider how incongruous it is that killing an unborn child one day is permissible, but illegal the next day once that child is born. Cherish Life Queensland upholds the right to life of all humans, from conception to natural death. Therefore, we believe that the unborn child is a human being who deserves protection under law. At 24 days of gestation, there is a heartbeat. At 8 ½ weeks, that child's unique fingerprints are being engraved and at 10 weeks the child is sensitive to touch. At 11 and 12 weeks, the baby can make complex facial expressions, like smiling and can kick, turn his or her feet, curl toes, make a fist, open his or her mouth and turn his or her head. By 20 weeks, a baby is old enough to survive should he or she be born prematurely. Technological advances in imaging in recent years are testament to the fact that there is a small but very much living person, full of potential, inside the womb.

We are sensitive to the very difficult situations women and men with unplanned pregnancies can find themselves in. We believe that abortion is not the answer, as it can potentially cause more harm – emotional, mental and physical – to that mother. There are other more caring alternatives for parents in these situations. We ask the committee to consider ways to support mothers and fathers, rather than considering ways to kill their babies. One of these options is baby safe havens – a safe place supervised 24 hours a day – where mothers can leave their babies in care without fear of legal ramifications. Another is more government support for organisations that provide safe refuge, and pregnancy, birth and post -natal counselling, education and assistance. Adoption is always another option and there are so many couples without children who would love to be parents.

Already there are an estimated 10000 unborn Queenslanders aborted each year – it is clearly not difficult to gain access to one. We are opposed to any change that would increase this already tragic figure.

Yours sincerely,

Jacinta Purcell, Traudy Leahy, Sue Inness, Carmel Donahoe – members of Cherish Life Qld Inc. Sunshine Coast Branch.