

Subject: Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right To Choose) Amendment Bill 2016

Personal submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Dear Committee,

I support the removal of abortion from Queensland's 1899 Criminal Code.

Laws criminalising abortion are outdated and have no place in modern Australia. I do not want my Queensland sisters to face the threat of possible prosecution for choosing to terminate a pregnancy, nor do I want the doctors who help them to be fearful of breaking the law. Queensland and New South Wales are the only states where it's possible for women to be charged for an abortion. It's time to move this issue out of the Criminal Code and make it well and truly a health decision between a woman and her doctor, the way it is in many other Australian jurisdictions.

Laws criminalising abortion create problems in accessing services which have a far greater impact on women already experiencing disadvantage. Women in rural and remote areas, and women experiencing violence, are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to abortion access.

Unplanned pregnancy and abortion are a reality of women's lives. It's estimated that half all pregnancies in Australia are unplanned, and that over one in four Australian women will have an abortion at some point in their life. No contraceptive is 100% effective, and rates of violence and sexual coercion are high. No woman 'wants' to have an abortion, but safe and legal services need to be available when they deem it best. Criminalising abortion prevents this from happening.

I am concerned at reports of women attempting to induce their own abortion at home because they can't access a safe procedure, and of women being turned away from public hospitals when requesting abortion for a pregnancy resulting from rape. This is not the Queensland I want to live in.

The majority of the population supports a woman's right to choose, according to reliable opinion polling. I believe that those opposed to abortion make up a tiny proportion of the population and their vocal opposition to change should not be taken to be representative of broader community sentiment.

Women in other states and territories of Australia have the legal right to choose abortion. I want women in Queensland to have the same rights.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

References:

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Right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Available
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