

**From:**  
**To:** [abortionlawreform](#)  
**Subject:** Submission on abortion law changes  
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Thank you for the opportunity to have my say.

Regardless of what is written in legislation, girls and women will have abortions. That is the reality. Unplanned and unwanted pregnancies are common in Queensland and worldwide whether they be from consensual sex or rape. We have recently heard in the media about the 12 yr old girl who had to go through the added trauma ( and delay) of a Supreme Court hearing to be legally permitted to have an abortion. My understanding is that everyone involved from the girl herself, her parents, counsellors, and doctors all were in favour of her having an abortion but due to possible criminal liability, a legal process was considered necessary to protect the doctors and hospital. As a lawyer, I can safely assume that lawyers were the major beneficiaries of that process by their legal fees. It is unlikely to have created a precedent in that every "case" ( aka young girl who wants an abortion) will face a similar process due to the fear by doctors and hospitals of criminal liability, precedent or not.

Those who object to abortions appear to largely base their objections on their personal religious beliefs. They have the right to follow their own beliefs in so far as their own bodies are concerned, however they should not have the right to interfere with the rights of girls and women to make decisions about theirs. Religious beliefs should play no part in reviewing abortion laws. They should not receive priority of their beliefs over other people's beliefs. None of their personal freedoms are proposed to be taken away as they will never be forced to have an abortion against their religious beliefs. However decriminalised abortions would be equally available to them if they find themselves in a position of wanting an abortion.

As a society we should acknowledge that abortions occur all the time and in accepting that fact we should strive to make sure they are done in the best possible way to protect the mental and physical health of girls and women who want to have an abortion. Easy quick access ( as time is of the essence) to a safe abortion regardless of where they live or their financial means is essential. Abortion laws simply cannot continue as they stand with the fear of criminal liability, and lack of safe and affordable access. I do not think that placing legal limits on late term abortions is appropriate. You will no doubt have the statistics on the reasons for late term abortions, but I understand they are almost exclusively due to life threatening reasons for the girl or woman or that the foetus is not viable. To force a girl or woman to carry a foetus to term when it has no chance at life is cruel and unnecessary. Let girls and women with their medical professionals make those decisions without legal restrictions.

Abortions must be removed from the Criminal Code. It is a travesty that they are still a crime in 2016!

Thank you.

Alison Courtice