

28 June 2016

Submission to the: Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, Queensland Parliament, in response to the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*

By email: abortionlawreform@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Support for the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016* Bill

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into laws governing the termination of pregnancy in Queensland. I am a lawyer currently employed at the TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, however I have prepared this submission in my personal capacity.

I support Rob Pyne MP's Bill for the following reasons:

- Recent case law (Teagan Leach, Q case) demonstrate that the current approach is outdated, uncertain and in need of a complete overhaul;
- Current law does not reflect reality: Queensland has approximately 15,000 pregnancy terminations per year, all of which are 'illegal';
- Doctors have little choice but to manufacture severe mental illness of a woman in order to satisfy the current legal test for pregnancy termination. This is paternalistic to women, and demeaning to both their medical doctors and to women themselves;
- Decriminalisation of abortion will likely lower the overall rate of abortion. Existing research suggests that abortions are higher in jurisdictions where it is illegal. Canada is a case in point;
- The vast majority of Queenslanders want abortion law reform in this state. Provisions of the Queensland Criminal Code that specify how and when an abortion may be conducted are completely outdated and have no place in modern society. Advances in medical technology and improved patient care necessitate reform to these laws in order to bring them into the 21st century.

I have read, and I endorse, the submission made by my colleague *Professor Heather Douglas* to this inquiry. I note the considerable evidence-based research quoted by Professor Douglas in her submission, and I would respectfully urge the committee to consider this reform in light of research that supports it.

Yours faithfully,

Monica Taylor -