

28 June 2016

Selina Utting

Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention
Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

**Submission to the Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill
2016 and Inquiry into laws governing termination of pregnancy in Queensland**

I ask the Queensland Parliament to decriminalise women and remove the abortion provisions from the Criminal Code.

Women are caring and rational humans. It is offensive and demeaning for anyone to suggest that women are just waiting to be pregnant for eight months and six days so they can rush off to have an abortion. These views represent a society where one in every four women has experienced violence (refer [ANROWS](#)). Our society requires change, where women are respected and decisions about their body are their own decisions.

For twelve years, I have worked as the Finance Manager of Children by Choice. During these years, I have helped over 3000 women to get the money together to pay for an abortion. I hope that they will write a submission to you. However, I know that it is unlikely, because experiences like sleeping rough in your car, being raped at Schoolies, borrowing your grandfather's pension money, being branded a slut on Facebook, repaying a rent debt owed by your boyfriend, trying to look after your existing four children with no support; these are not stories that women want to share. Yet these are the real cases of women who seek abortion.

It is hard for me to arrange a No Interest Loan (NILS) of \$200 for a woman experiencing poverty in Queensland, when I know that if she had been fortunate enough to be living in Victoria or South Australia or New Zealand or most of Europe, she could walk into a hospital and get immediate support to access a publicly provided termination. It makes me ashamed to be a Queenslander, with laws from 1899 still on the books.

We are regularly informed about the overwhelming load on the public health system. Yet instead of abortion being a private matter between a woman and her doctor, it can involve two psychiatrists, an O&G, a Social Worker, the hospital administrator, a lawyer and the court. This is not just traumatic for the woman, it is stressful and costly for everyone.

I respect all the women who have decided that it is not the right time in their life to become a parent, and I ask the government to do the same.

Selina Utting