

29 June 2016

Research Director
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Committee
Parliament House
George Street QLD 4000

Dear sir/madam,

RE: QLD ABORTION LAW REFORM

We refer to the above matter and now enclose our submission for the Inquiry into Abortion Law Reform on behalf of the Board of Queensland Baptists.

Regards,

Colin Chandler (Acting For) Phillip McCallum
Director – Administrative Services

Queensland Baptists Board

Submission to the inquiry into Qld Abortion Law Reform

Who we are:

Queensland Baptists are the third largest Christian denomination in Queensland represented by more than 200 worshipping communities and over 50,000 regular attendees.

What we believe:

As a Christian community of faith we believe that God is the creator and sustainer of life. We believe that God, in Jesus, has communicated His love for all He has made, and is passionate in His care for the ostracised, the oppressed, especially vulnerable women and children. On this basis we believe that all life is to be valued and cherished and this includes women, men and children of all ages and includes those children who are as yet unborn and carried in their mother's womb. A central tenet of our faith is that we are not to stand in judgement over other people. In light of this we do not seek to condemn those who are in crisis pregnancy and those who make the extremely difficult decision to terminate the life of the unborn child.

What we stand for:

We recognise that the issue of abortion is a highly distressing issue for many people within our wider society. There would be few within our worshipping communities who have not in some way been touched by the painful nature of this issue. We recognise the emotional anguish that many women have experienced when faced with an unplanned pregnancy and/or the realisation that the child they are carrying has serious medical concerns. As a community of faith we seek to reach out in genuine love and care for all who find themselves in such circumstances.

Notwithstanding, we believe that from the moment of conception a new life has been formed so that in all of our considerations we must demonstrate equal concern for both the mother and her unborn child. We recognise that there are occasions when, due to extreme medical complications, a mother's life will be in imminent danger should her pregnancy be allowed to continue. If the medical complications are of such a nature that the mother's life is in real danger should the pregnancy be allowed to continue, the first priority is the preservation of the mother's life.

We also stand for freedom of conscience, so we are concerned for health professionals who may face discrimination or prosecution when they refuse to take part in abortion.

What we request:

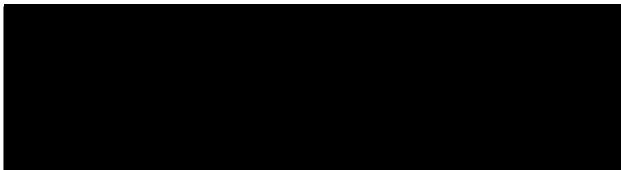
In respect to the proposed introduction of legislation that provides for abortion of unborn children, we respectfully request that the Queensland Parliament reject the member for Cairns proposed bill.

We also respectfully request the parliament to affirm the principle of freedom of conscience by legislating to protect all health professionals who, for religious reasons or not, believe that the unborn child is fully human from conception. Of course where the mother's life is seriously in danger health professionals have a duty of care to preserve her life even if that necessitates terminating the pregnancy

We recognise that whilst abortion is currently illegal in Queensland there are over 10,000 surgical abortions in Queensland every year.¹ We would therefore urgently request that where medical practitioners advise that it is in the best interests of the mother to abort her baby, the following guidelines be legislated for where there is no imminent danger to the mother's life:

- a) that independent counselling be mandatory; and
- b) that a cooling off period be mandatory between the receipt of the advice to abort and the actual procedure.

We ask that the committee look favourably on this submission and would value the opportunity to make further representations in person.



Rev Peter Sweetman
Board Chair
Queensland Baptists

¹ Medicare Australia Statics 2014

http://medicarestatistics.humanservices.gov.au/statistics/mbs_item.jsp