

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

We, the undersigned, represent the bulk of the Specialists in the field of Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) and tertiary Obstetric ultrasound currently working in Queensland. MFM is a subspecialty of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, and amongst other aspects of high-risk pregnancy we deal with many women each year who have concerns about possible fetal abnormalities. For a number of these women the difficult choice of discontinuing the pregnancy is one of the options to be considered. Unfortunately the legal position in Queensland in relation to termination of pregnancy can make it extraordinarily difficult to navigate the health system and gain access to safe and timely clinical services. At a very difficult time, when women are faced with a distressing choice, there is a significant additional burden caused by the fact that abortion is a crime. We think this is intolerable and is not something that should be acceptable in a modern society.

We strongly support the decriminalisation of abortion, and would like to see this necessary procedure become a woman's right to choose, in consultation with her doctor(s). We also understand that there are community concerns about retaining some level of control over later gestation abortion. We are of the view that the Victorian Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 recognised these concerns and those involved in drafting the legislation made a pragmatic decision to require an additional opinion and support from a second medical practitioner from 24 weeks of gestation. Therefore we support introducing legislation in Queensland that mirrors the Victorian situation, and at the same time we call for removal of abortion from the Queensland Criminal Code Act 1899.

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**Professor Sailesh Kumar**  
**Associate Professor Rob Cincotta**  
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**Dr Glenn Gardener**  
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