

To the Committee

In response to Rob Pyne's private members bill to legalise abortion, I fear it will not achieve the outcome hoped for, but only add to the pain. What women want is the support to make a decision they can live with.

I believe that what is needed instead are things like access to unbiased counseling (ie. The counselor is not paid by the abortion clinic) and a cooling off period – we have one for real estate purchases, is this any less serious? Women in Queensland seem to have little trouble accessing abortion under the current legislation, but the *Priceless Life Centre* reports that they do express having a *great deal* of trouble accessing *alternatives*, and being *pressured* to make a decision *quickly*.

I also strongly believe that medical staff should be able to continue to exercise their conscience in this matter. It is also necessary that distraught and cornered women should at least be able to fall back on "No, I don't want to do anything illegal," as a last resort when their partner or parents or principal are pressuring them to abort. I think it is important to retain the idea that abortion could lead to harm and needs to be treated seriously, like drink driving, drug use and many other dangerous practices.

Making abortion legal will not take away the pain, guilt or shame. It will only add to the numbers of wounded people, and leave them feeling like they have nowhere to turn because their wounds are not recognized and their pain is not acknowledged. I truly believe that it would do **more harm than good**, plain and simple, and that there would be many unforeseen ramifications if this bill is passed.

The laws as they currently stand offer safeguards to women who are being pressured into an abortion against their will, and also to medical staff to exercise their own conscience. Legalising abortion up till birth and forcing doctors to assist will not help women. So many are already traumatised by abortion, but making it legal will not take away the pain, only a healing of the wounded spirit can do that.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the submissions of those organisations that perform abortion grief counseling such as *Priceless Life Centre* and *Rachel's Vineyard* among others. I believe that the committee should pay particular attention to these organisations as it is they who have the most experience and insight to offer in relation to the ramifications of this bill.

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