

From:
To: [abortionlawreform](#)
Subject: Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right To Choose) Amendment Bill 2016
Date: Wednesday, 29 June 2016 8:28:50 PM

Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right To Choose) Amendment Bill 2016

Personal submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Dear Committee,

I support the removal of abortion from Queensland's 1899 Criminal Code.

Laws criminalising abortion are outdated and have no place in modern Australia. I do not want my Queensland sisters to face the threat of possible prosecution for choosing to terminate a pregnancy, nor do I want the doctors who help them to be fearful of breaking the law. Queensland and New South Wales are the only states where it's possible for women to be charged for an abortion. It's time to move this issue out of the Criminal Code and make it well and truly a health decision between a woman and her doctor, the way it is in many other Australian jurisdictions.

Laws criminalising abortion create problems in accessing services which have a far greater impact on women already experiencing disadvantage. Women in rural and remote areas, and women experiencing violence, are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to abortion access.

Unplanned pregnancy and abortion are a reality of women's lives. It's estimated that half all pregnancies in Australia are unplanned, and that over one in four Australian women will have an abortion at some point in their life. No contraceptive is 100% effective, and rates of violence and sexual coercion are high. No woman 'wants' to have an abortion, but safe and legal services need to be available when they deem it best. Criminalising abortion prevents this from happening.

I am concerned at reports of women attempting to induce their own abortion at home because they can't access a safe procedure, and of women being turned away from public hospitals when requesting abortion for a pregnancy resulting from rape. This is not the Queensland I want to live in.

The majority of the population supports a woman's right to choose, according to reliable opinion polling. I believe that those opposed to abortion make up a tiny proportion of the population and their vocal opposition to change should not be taken to be representative of broader community sentiment.

Women in other states and territories of Australia have the legal right to choose abortion. I want women in Queensland to have the same rights.

As a student of midwifery, I encounter women from all over Queensland in my study and placement at a major maternity hospital in Brisbane.

To me, midwifery is a profession that is vital to the quality of women's lives, they are empowered by their own strength throughout pregnancy and birth, with maternity care

playing an intrinsic role in breaking cycles and barriers for future generations.

I feel the current legality of abortion access in this state abhorrent, it is criminal to me that it is up to the state to decide when abortions are warranted or not. I have already found myself in my limited experience in this profession leaving university placement feeling angry, upset, and helpless, as I watch victims of abuse have their lives dictated from afar by those in power who could never in their wildest dreams understand the complexities of abuse cycles and the impact bringing an unwanted child into this world has on the mother and baby, physically and psychologically.

In this profession of women's empowerment I will never be able to do my job to its full capacity when I care for women already defeated before they walk in the door, already at the mercy of their bodies against their will, already wary to the world at large being against them, resigned to the fact that this period of life that is usually full of joy and growth and love is not even theirs to own.

I do not want to have to see coming through the doors of a major maternity hospital in the year 2016 one more 15 year old victim of rape question to me her future, or mother having her 10th child, putting her own health at risk because of an abusive husband who controls her every breath, or women paying the price for enjoying her sexuality, which men are free to do without consequence or question on the daily.

Working towards a stronger, healthier Queensland begins when the women of this state are given the basic body autonomy that they are entitled to.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Imogen Donato

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