

To the Research Director - Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee
Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane. Qld 4000

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

We submit our deep concern that this Bill is proposing legalisation of unwise, unethical and potentially dangerous practices.

The debate about when human life begins and develops the right to be preserved is a passionate one. While our own view that abortion ought to be strongly discouraged at any stage of pregnancy (except where the mother's life is at risk), we understand that our view is not shared by all our fellow Queenslanders.

However, consideration of late term abortions surely moves beyond this debate into the arena of manslaughter and murder. Our fine medical practitioners in our Government funded hospitals perform marvelous works in preserving the life of prematurely born babies. Currently, with medical assistance, human life is viable as early as 26 weeks and in some cases even earlier. Future advances in medical science and practice could see a gradual reduction in this age of viability. Many Queenslanders celebrate the life of premature babies.

Deliberate ending of the life of a viable premature baby outside of the womb, we understand, is considered murder or manslaughter. Alongside of this, we cannot see the logic in allowing the deliberate ending of the life of a baby of similar age while still in the womb. Our society doesn't simply call the object of a pregnancy a lifeless thing or lump in the womb but instead celebrates 'baby bumps' (including much earlier than 26 weeks) on the one hand and mourns the loss miscarriages and still births on the other.

We are of the strong view that any review of the abortion law and practices must include preserving the right of medical practitioners to refrain from participating in abortions when this contravenes their own ethical standards and beliefs.

A woman's right to choose needs to be backed up with a woman's right to be informed of the facts regarding abortion – to enable her to objectively weigh up the benefits and risks. We therefore urge you to promote the easy availability of counselling that openly discusses not only the perceived benefits but also the potential serious physical and/or psychological effects of abortion and the alternatives solutions that may be sought.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission,

Mr Geoffrey Rees Thomas and Mrs Rhonda Rees Thomas