

30<sup>th</sup> June, 2016

**Submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services, and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee  
on the Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016  
and its concurrent consideration, report and recommendations to the House into  
aspects of the law governing termination of pregnancy in Queensland and options  
regarding (a) to (e).**

**On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016, in reply to a question on Notice in the Queensland Parliament, the Queensland Minister for Health acknowledged that we are dealing with human lives when he spoke of “the number of termination procedures where babies are born with signs of life at this stage (of 20 weeks gestation)”. His statement to the Parliament showed that 27 aborted babies of 20 weeks life or more had been born alive in Queensland hospitals in 2015, and added that there MAY be physiological support of the baby to relieve potential for suffering.**

**The figures provided to the Parliament show 8 livebirth abortion outcomes in 2005. The number has increased from 20 in 2011 for each of the last 5 years. The number of abortions being performed in private practice in Queensland is estimated, I understand, as at least 8000 per year, each year.**

**Also, for many years now organizations, which receive some taxpayer funding, have been a resource for information on sexual reproduction, accessed by many teenagers. Anecdotal evidence clearly indicates that any female experiencing an unexpected pregnancy – even those at increasingly young ages engaging in sexual activity – see dealing with new life having 2 options only: keep the baby, or abort. The life solution – adoption – under the current Act is simply not an option. Abortion seems such an easy solution in our throw-away society, when you are not properly informed. It's quick, private, her life is not disrupted – for now. This has bred, to a degree, a community attitude that abortion is the best way to deal with what is not always, but reasonably often, a socially inconvenient situation. There is an acceptance almost by the wider society of the unacknowledged censorship by the media, by Government, of what is really happening - if we're not confronted by it, it's not happening. Of course, we can't see these little lives – so we express outrage over cattle, whales, turtles, you name it. We can SEE them – and there's graphic media coverage – but not of the abortion procedure, or even full information and public discussion of the issue. Why?**

1.

**This is all happening under our current law, which nominally offers protection to the baby. Our Minister for Health, in his statement to Parliament, acknowledged we are dealing with a human life . Abortion extinguishes that life. Taking life is, and should be, a criminal offence. This Bill, seeking abortion on demand, offers no protection at all for new life. radically altering the public concept of right and wrong, Using extreme cases to justify such radical change is very poor public policy.**

**The Pyne statement introducing the Bill seeks to claim that changing the law to prevent the risk of prosecution of those taking the life of the unborn child - even one fully formed at 9 months gestation, will benefit the mother's health. Yet there is ample evidence, on many levels, that there are many factors in play, not only for the mother post-abortion, but the father, the wider family, the staff involved, even in cases the practitioners themselves, and from the volume of evidence of the post-abortion trauma which can result, it is clear the basis of this claim is fallacious. In fact, section (e) in the terms of reference allows this is an issue, for the mother at least.**

**Why would any intelligent adult believe that legalizing a social evil, which this Bill seeks to do, will help alleviate the ills attendant on it? I can only conclude that the driver for it, dress it up as we may, relates to feminist philosophy. Hard-core feminist philosophy has been shaping our society for many years now, even though there is almost complete lack of awareness of this in the general community. Abortion on demand is the basic tenet. The 'Just War' theory – St. Augustine, as interpreted by feminist Gloria Steinem, says it all. "If pro-abortionists are unable to prevent increased social autonomy for the unborn, then women's rights to abortion must be seen as an instance of the right to kill those things whose invasion of one's life threaten its integrity". NOT my words.**

**Is this Bill really consistent with Fundamental Legal Principles?? It certainly cannot be with the Medical Principle of DO NO HARM.**

**2.**

**Pyne's statement introducing this Bill describes current provisions as "archaic, outdated, with no place in a modern, liberal democracy." Does that define a modern, liberal democracy as one which treats human life not yet born as just another throw-away commodity? Perhaps the framers of the current 'archaic etc' legislation, flawed in execution as it is, were more civilized, more aware of the intrinsic value of human life, than the proponents of this Bill? The fact that other States, in particular Victoria, have even more uncivilized legislation, is no reason for us to follow suit. In fact, the reverse should apply.**

**Consider the evidence. Does legalizing a social evil minimize its harm? History shows not! In fact, abortions will undoubtedly increase, so it is important that in considering this Bill, there should be an awareness that we have in Australia an established profitable private abortion industry, which receives taxpayer dollars through Medicare for the 100,000 abortions already being performed in Australia each year. So costs to the taxpayer, many of whom bitterly resent their tax dollars going to such inherently wrong practice, will be impacted adversely – to say nothing of the escalating health costs of post-abortion trauma.**

**Over many years now, huge advances in reproductive technologies have taken place. Traditional ultrasounds, sonograms, and 3-Dimensional ultrasounds open up the world of the unborn; foetal surgery can correct anomalies; the ultrasound image is now regarded as the first baby photo; all these advances give the unborn child a cultural and political status more fitted to our modern world, and it is time our society recognised this. It was as far back as 1999 when in the USA baby Samuel at 21 weeks gestation clutched the finger of surgeon Joseph Bruner, who was operating on him in utero to alleviate spina bifida. The photo of the achievement was shown on Fox network, and has been shown many times since.**

**3.**

With such advances and others in mind, I have a real problem with aspects of this issue. The Pyne motion in Parliament specifically nominated your Committee to consider and report to Parliament on this Bill. Your Committee has responsibility over not only Health, but also Domestic Family Violence Protection. Abortion is the ultimate Family Violence to the most defenceless of human life, irreconcilable with the aims of this Bill. While we condone this least excusable Family violence, there is no credibility in a Government condemning other violence – and spending large amounts of taxpayer dollars doing so - simply because it is visible.

This inconsistency of goal objectives for your Committee, combined with the Bill's lack of recognition of reproductive technological advances, means that inevitably Government will be required to provide more up-to-date humane solutions. For that reason, I believe the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee, with its responsibility for Innovation, Science, and the Digital Economy, should also be considering this Bill, and contributing to the Report to Parliament. A fully informed and educated citizenry, participating in a continuing, open, civilized, objective public discussion on this issue, seeking the best outcome for women, babies at whatever stage of life, a general appreciation of these serious life issues, would optimize some deeper understanding of this serious social issue, would lift ethical values of our society and quality of life for all. It would enable Queensland to lead the way in best practice of multi-level care for women and babies of a modern, really progressive liberal democracy!

I sincerely trust you will give deep, objective deliberation, and wide consultation in preparing your Report to Parliament – and after such serious consideration NOT recommend the Bill to the House.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Mrs) Bridget McCullagh

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