

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

by the

**Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and  
Family Violence Prevention Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane. Queensland**

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## Submission Opposing the Proposed Bill

I oppose the Bill which seeks to decriminalise abortion, and which proposes legislation which would allow for late term abortions right up to just prior to birth, removing all safeguards for women and unborn babies, and requiring doctors and medical staff to participate in a practice which many oppose on ethical and humane grounds.

I would like to make the following points:

### 1. Cruelty

The ultrasound has swept away the claim that, in the early stages of pregnancy, the foetus is just a "bunch of cells". Now we, the public, can know that a tiny body is formed very soon after conception. Recently researchers reaffirmed that the growth of the brain is well under way at a very early stage (ABC News 27/06/16).

At 8 weeks there is blood circulation. The heart is beating. There is a little torso, tiny arms and legs and a head growing bigger in proportion to the body. By 12 weeks there is movement of the body, flinching when the abortionist's instrument touches it, showing sensitivity. The brain and nerve fibres, medical science tells us, must be functioning for anyone to feel pain. Brain cells which are essential for consciousness in the adult are known to be present in the foetus by 10 weeks and nerve fibres which transmit pain impulses are known to be present before fibres inhibiting pain are completed. We can assume then that the foetus at this stage can feel pain. When the abortionist's instrument tears the little body apart it is very quick, but still a barbaric and cruel act.

The procedures used during the second trimester are even more gruesome as the baby grows bigger. I understand that some clinics in the USA still use the induction method, ie scalding a baby to death in a saline solution. It takes a long time to die. This procedure should never be an option in Australia but there is rumour that it is. The procedures of Dilation and Curettage or Dilation and Evacuation are gruesome enough.

Third Term Abortions, when the baby is viable, should never be considered. The procedures of Partial Birth Abortion and similar barbaric practices could only be performed by practitioners who are callous and cruel beyond description.

Many Australians have been horrified at the inhumane treatment of animals by the operators of the live export trade. Cruelty should never be an option in the handling of animals. How much more should we insist that cruelty should never be an option in the handling of children, born or unborn, yet it has recently been

revealed by our Health Department that babies who survive abortion have been left to die in Australian hospitals and clinics.

## **2. Health Risks for the Mother**

Should the mother's life be threatened or there be a serious health risk if the pregnancy is allowed to proceed to full term, I would recommend that the baby be taken early in the third trimester by caesarean operation. I understand this can be done safely with only a local anaesthetic without too much trauma for the mother. Then every effort could be made to save the baby as well.

## **3. Other Health risks Associated with Abortion**

There are also other health risks associated with abortion. Not every woman who seeks an abortion is immoral or heartless. Women are often under pressure from life's difficult circumstances or from unsympathetic partners or relatives. Many are sensitive women who, in their hearts, would like to keep their babies. Abortion for them is often followed by depression, sometimes long-term depression, and other mental health issues. There is also guilt and self blame which can undermine their relationships and have an impact on the rest of their lives.

Abortion has been shown to contribute to a host of physical, emotional, social, economic and spiritual problems for post-abortive mothers, and also for fathers, and we must not forget the very real possibility of cancer being triggered by abortion. In their report *Breast Cancer: Risks & Prevention* Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery Dr Angela Lanfranchi and Dr Joel Brind, using known medical facts and pointing to peer-reviewed research, explain the increased incidence of breast cancer in women whose pregnancies terminate (accidental or intentional) before 32 weeks.

## **4. Removal of Protection**

If this Bill is passed by the Parliament it will remove a protection that women now have from being pressured into intercourse. This is especially concerning in relation to minors, young girls being pressured into experimental sex with the assurance that, if anything goes wrong, they can easily get an abortion. The intercourse itself has a damaging effect when two adolescents are involved, impacting upon the brain of each and short-circuiting its development. As well there is always the possibility of venereal disease which can lead to infertility and, as pointed out above, we must not forget the role that abortion plays in triggering cancer.

This Bill if it becomes law will also remove protection for health care professionals who will be forced to participate in providing abortions regardless of

their personal beliefs. Late-term and full-term abortions are especially traumatising for medical practitioners who are life-affirming in their approach

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to patients and it can leave mothers, fathers and entire families with post-abortion grief and often a lifetime of regret.

## 5. Care and Support

The pregnancy healthcare system of doctors, nurses and psychologists needs to be enabled to provide **better practical support and holistic care** to women who are distressed because of their pregnancy. Abortion at any stage of pregnancy should never be seen as a quick fix.

## 6. The Taking of human life

Most importantly we must not forget that to abort an unborn baby is to take a human life. The Canberra Declaration states that "*The very heart of a civilised society is based on the way it treats its most vulnerable and innocent members including the unborn and the disabled.*" We do not want to become like Victoria which has some of the most extreme abortion laws in the Western world, but thankfully also has some caring professionals who have been trying to redress at least some of the wrongs with proposed legislation recently rejected by inhumane members of Victoria's Parliament.

## Conclusion

I am hopeful that the Committee will give serious thought to the points I have made and that they will oppose any move to decriminalize abortion in Queensland, while making recommendations for increased support for women in need.

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