

28 June 2016

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

To the Parliamentary Committee

Please accept this submission, author Alicia Harris, my personal and professional comments as a Social Worker of 6 years.

It is my personal and professional belief that abortion should NOT be included in Queensland's criminal code sections 224, 225 & 226. As a female citizen and a counsellor in a rural town, I believe that it is extremely detrimental for women to feel forced to go through with unwanted or unplanned pregnancies due to the fear of facing criminal charges. In both my personal and professional experience, I have met women who are pregnant and know it would have a traumatic and negative effect on their physical and or mental health to continue with the pregnancy. The decision to terminate, I believe is never a decision a woman could take lightly. To add to this decision, the woman can be held legally responsible. WHY? To me this is unfathomable.

In a rural community, women are already disadvantaged by having less choice in regards to medical practitioners, as here in Rockhampton abortions can only be performed one day a week by a fly-in/fly out doctor. One of the biggest barriers to accessing abortions is the cost. Current costs start at \$700.00. Rockhampton has a high proportion of low socio-economic households, and \$700+ is a great deal of money required, when already in an emotionally vulnerable state of mind.

I strongly believe that NO woman should be forced to continue and unplanned pregnancy when they feel they are unable to cope with the pressures of raising a child. I believe this would have a high likelihood of the child ending up in the statutory system, which is already overloaded and a drain on society.

**The Qld Abortion Law IS ARCHIAC – and needs to come into the NOW !**

**Our Community is ready and wanting reform**

Yours sincerely

Alicia Harris