

Julie McNeill ~ Grand-Mother 2016

submission to Queensland Parliament Health,
Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and
Family Violence Prevention Committee

30 June 2016

Julie McNeill

To the Committee members,

I have spent most of my 52years life caring and educating children personally and as a professional puppeteer, pre-school leader. My passion to bring joy and learning to youth is now focussed on my grand-children.

I write pleading for Parliament to finally remove abortion from the Queensland Criminal Code, and put it within Reproductive Health along with other medical help.

Reflecting on my own experience having an abortion as a 30year old wife and mother of two young girls, I can say it was the best decision I made for myself and my family to thrive.

I write because the process I had to go through in seeking a termination at the time was thwarted by public hospital board and staff whose job and conscience was dictated by the God of Abraham.

The archaic legislation was written by powerful men in a time before women could vote. She had no autonomy at all. Even though every female from puberty to menopause has to manage their reproductive health

herself the ultimate authoritarianism is to force her to be pregnant and give birth.

I was able to go to the Family Planning Clinic for contraceptives in the 1980's until my husband had a vasectomy. Forgetting one pill one day sent me on an unnecessary ordeal fighting for my own right to do what I willed with my body, and a foetus I didn't want to nurture.

The process of deciding an abortion is the best thing to do involved being unemployed so that we could hardly pay electricity bills. As a mother I knew I didn't want to be pregnant. I had enjoyed the planned parenthood.

I asked myself, what if I adopt? I couldn't bare giving up a baby which was mine and I couldn't trust Church or State with a baby. They might call me a criminal but I knew the horrors they have put children through.

The Royal Commissions and Forde Inquiry's into child abuse was not new because my mother was a "bastard" and sent out to Australia as a child migrant.

My Grandmother's were forced to be pregnant before contraception, when Rape was blamed on the woman, and the biological father didn't have to stay inside the house in shame.

I speak of this because as a reader of women's history you become well aware of the generational impacts of laws prejudicial of female autonomy. The anti-abortion argument for a sanctity of life no matter what holds no sway when Parliaments want to send young soldiers into Wars, killing civilians as collateral damage.

Given support women thrive for themselves and their societies. She is not a Criminal for terminating a pregnancy. My daughters shouldn't have to convince a Doctor they are mentally ill to get an abortion.

No female should have to beg money from charities to obtain an abortion. There ought to be public medicare assistance to continue with her life. Of course the State should make sure information on sexuality and contraception is distributed throughout communities.

Sincerely yours,

Julie McNeill