

30 June 2016

Research Director

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

Re: *Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016.*

Dear Committee Members,

In your consideration of the aforementioned Bill, we request that with respect to any abortion law reform, that this legislation **include provisions for Medical, Nursing and Midwifery Practitioners who, for reasons of conscience, neither wish to perform, nor refer for termination of pregnancy, be exempt from the legal obligation to do so.**

Given that under the current legislative framework there are approximately 14,000 women accessing abortion services annually in Queensland, we do not think the above provision would provide a significant impediment to women accessing these services if they wish to do so.

We respectfully request that due consideration be given to the effects on a practitioner, if they were directed by legislation to act against their conscience.

We ask the Committee to consider that as freedom of conscience is one of the fundamental rights afforded by our democracy, enjoyed by the women we care for, and indeed will be exercised by Members of the Queensland Parliament in voting on this legislation, that the same privilege be afforded to the healthcare practitioners and others who will be working with the practical consequences of any legislative change.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr Luke McLindon, Obstetrician/Gynaecologist, MBBS, FRACGP, FRANZCOG, [REDACTED]

Dr Paul Bretz, Obstetrician/Gynaecologist, MBBS, FRANZCOG, [REDACTED]

Dr Emma Paterson, Senior Registrar O&G, MBBS, BSc, BAO, LRCPI, LRCSI, [REDACTED]

Dr Huda Safa, Obstetrician/Gynaecologist, MBChB, Dip O&G, FRANZCOG, [REDACTED]

Dr Len Yared, Obstetrician/Gynaecologist, MBBS, FRANZCOG, FRCOG, [REDACTED]

Dr Paul Devenish-Meares, Obstetrician, MBBS, FRANZCOG, [REDACTED]