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Paul Groves



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

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**Dear Members;**

Thank you for consideration of this 13 page submission. The last few pages are intended as a jocular reminder of how often we are led from something good into something stupid and destructive.

Please also note the second attachment to this email, entitled "What Queenslanders Really Think about Abortion".

Courage is a rare commodity.

Kind regards

Paul Groves

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### Referral

On 10 May 2016 Mr Rob Pyne MP, the Member for Cairns, introduced the *Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016* as a Private Members' Bill.

The only real thing we have in common, that can bring us together, *if we so desire*  
is Truth.

(Submissions may be sent by email: [abortionlawreform@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:abortionlawreform@parliament.qld.gov.au) )

## Comments against the Terms of Reference and other considerations:

### 1/ “existing practices in Queensland concerning termination of pregnancy by medical practitioners “

There is for me, a startling and erroneous concern underpinning these Terms of Reference (TOR) criteria. ‘Existing medical practices’ are not and should not be the first consideration, as though it can be said that because something is widely practiced (eg. slavery) it is therefore moral. Furthermore, the community would not accept that Doctors should be granted control over the law, how and when it is applied – they like the rest of us, must follow the law.

So primarily, we must ask ‘Why should abortion, which is the deliberate killing of an innocent human life be decriminalised - as though it is **not** manslaughter or worse?’ Indeed, we must ask; “How are we able or authorised to decide, morally, that any particular individual or group of humans are not entitled to all those human rights, historically afforded to each and every human, under any number of religious, secular, national or global, cultural ‘constitutions’?

We must likewise note the seriousness of the crime (rightly categorised) especially when the abortion debate is skewed away from the scientific facts with deliberately chosen, misleading language, designed to obfuscate, to placate and weaken the conscience of the community.

So such an erroneous premise is out of step with the science and civilised behaviour which exposes the medical techniques as truly barbaric, heinous, worse than medieval, at a time when we like to consider ourselves enlightened.

Yet, only recently, we have heard of hundreds of “born-alive-abortions-gone-wrong” babies, who the medical profession callously (criminally?) leave to die or worse, taking deliberate action to ensure death after birth. Who will this committee listen to and grant impartial credibility and why?

And, fundamental to the problem, it has not been established by impartial survey or research (ie. asking respondents plainly worded and pertinent questions based on fact) that decriminalisation is truly supported by “community attitudes” at all. It is however, recognised that a loud minority has confused their volume and their self-proclaimed status as the intelligentsia, for moral argument or as having being granted some moral authority to override the science and so sanction the killing of innocent humans.

Therefore please allow me to respectfully require of you my representatives, robust evidence of what “community attitudes” actually are, via as a minimum, an online, well worded survey/ petition/ website which completely exposes all sides of this issue to the blowtorch of transparent fact and public accountability. This committee should take on for itself a high bar of ensuring that at least 90% of those respondents want abortion decriminalised, in full understanding of what that means and will likely mean in the future (even from a demographic viewpoint bearing in mind the Chinese and Japanese experiences.) Only such a high bar reflects the seriousness of what has always been considered a very serious crime.

### 2/ “ existing legal principles that govern termination practices in Queensland “

This not only is a moot point but almost irrelevant. “Moot” because the current laws and legal principles are **not** being applied as they should, and as per the response at point 1 above, just because the existing practice is to turn a blind eye to current lawbreaking, that is no justification for the law not continuing to reflect the heinous nature of the offence, nor should we demote the opportunity for the law to lead the community to a better place - by promoting more civilised moral, alternatives. We become what we do. (cf; Aristotle)

Indeed we have seen that those who proffer civilised moral alternatives and who seek to have the law applied to protect the unborn, are themselves targeted - even jailed on ‘scrimpy’ charges of failing to “move on” or worse. Such is the mark of a sick society, that it seeks to paint black, white and white, black. Thus society progresses down the slippery slope to being further incapable of solving so many other problems.

**Rob Pyne’s** legislation reflects exactly that ‘degeneration’; the committee will stand in history as being part of the problem as above, or a conduit to a sustainable solution based on Truth, common to all good people.

“Almost Irrelevant”; because regardless of existing practices, the committee is tasked to go back to square one as it were, to review the science of abortion and as a priority, determine a sustainably moral (there is no other) course of action. The moral case requires such a review, as does moral government. You cannot build a moral case without acknowledging and fixing prior moral and associated practical failures which form the basis of Rob Pyne’s proposal and are admitted.

To summarise here, the policy objectives (that should inform any proposed or enacted law) are ones that set out and succeed in clearly proving the moral and practicable case for change (or not) and that such legislation can satisfy, is sustainable and fully supported by a well informed community.

**Rob Pyne’s proposition fails on each count**, ignoring the facts regarding Australia’s Christian values, the disproportionate nature of the action which attacks the unborn, indeed killing the baby, the health of the mother including ongoing psychological trauma post abortion, the economic effects on the community and civilisation’s need for alternate caring mechanisms, like a well managed adoption service.

3/ “ **the need to modernise and clarify the law (without altering current clinical practice), to reflect current community attitudes and expectations..”**

The language used here fails its attempt to camouflage the fact that ‘altering current clinical practice’ is clearly necessary:

‘Modernise’; it is unclear here what is being referred to. Based on what? For what purpose? To make doctors and clients feel better about the barbarity of their actions as though those actions are necessary and so excusable?

Surely our consciences should rightly feel uncomfortable when we kill another human, let alone without any moral authority? Clearly these ‘doctors’ already are comfortable committing abortions if not in breaking the law, so where is this need to ‘modernise and clarify’?

Is it just political and ideological – as it is polarising and divisive? As a community, the only thing we really have in common, with the power to bring good people together, is the Truth. We need to get to the truth about abortion, with a preparedness to be disciplined by that truth, and instead of ‘clarifying’ a law, again to anaesthetise one’s conscience, we should to the contrary, apply the existing law and even tighten it.

“Clarify”: It is inconceivable that currently, health workers and the judiciary don’t understand with perfect clarity what the law requires. Clarity is not the issue!

As for current community attitudes; again that has not been established; although there is considerable anecdotal evidence, repeated consistently over the years that **the community considers the rate of abortion far too high and costly** and likewise considers it a barbaric medical practice causing ongoing grief, yet still assuaging their consciences (and negating their democratic obligations) by leaving it to the woman, doctors or family, or someone else.

I would argue that if the community were able to be educated regarding some legal principles/ decisions, like the **Veivers v Connolly** case, the community would rightly and move further against some of the unjustified ideas proposed by the Pyne legislation. The mistake in that case was basic and reflects poorly on the judiciary involved. The negligence of the doctor is a given, but to then base the decision or penalty on ‘crystal ball speculation’, that the mother **would have** had an abortion because she **may have** accessed a lawful termination, is a non sequitur unsupported by evidence. Equally, she may have accessed an **illegal** abortion as one suspects is the majority case. Never mind the fact that under the current law, especially in this day and age of advanced medicine, the likely existence of a condition like rubella does not mean the health of the mother is threatened. Such sadly, is typical of the lengths some in our community go to, to provide emotional support for the concept of abortion and demonstrate their bias. The law should be tightened.

May I again repeat my stringent call for the Qld Government to rigorously establish, to quantify and to qualify community attitudes, before any 'diminution' to the criminal nature of abortion is affected.

#### 4/ “legislative and regulatory arrangements in other Australian jurisdictions including regulating terminations based on gestational periods ...”

Unfortunately the language used here again indicates a bias that the committee feels unable to recommend a tightening of abortion laws as indicated by the scientific facts and moral decency.

However on the matter as described; clearly there is no legal requirement that all States' laws regarding abortion, concur with each other, particularly in matters which are so arbitrary and equally wrong, as would be the case to allow for abortion based on ANY gestational period. Obviously as per grade one ethics, it is not licit to do wrong simply because someone else (Victoria for instance) does so.

Logically therefore, it is paramount, that if another State's legislation is to be adopted or modelled, then that Legislation is fully interrogated for its bona fides, for its concurrence with established community attitudes here, and its proven success (or otherwise) not only in protecting the unborn, but also in protecting conscience and religious rights - of those who may be innocently caught up in the actions of other people.

Nothing should distract us from these priorities and further highlights the need for a well laid out, online based education program (and subsequent survey to establish genuine community attitudes) and one which elucidates all sides of this issue with objective and factual clarity; this must come **first** to alert all in the community to these vital issues - fundamental to a healthy democracy.

Further, the TOR wording here is again demonstrable of an inherent bias, for there can be no moral (or logical) argument which would accept that abortions be made legal, based on gestational periods. Granted, such errors have occurred elsewhere confusing the realms of physiology with human rights, but nowhere has a cogent argument for such a decision been laid out and substantiated. It is nothing more than the culpable thinking of those who take it upon themselves to arbitrarily decide for another, when their life is worth living. Their culpability is confirmed when the same erroneous thinking allows for abortion up to birth, especially knowing that the community at large, has always disdained such an evil.

Again I ask who is morally authorised to make such arbitrary decisions – does that come from one's circumstance or perhaps a modern day 'privileged club uniform' like the SS collar of not long ago? No such authority exists or has ever been granted by moral government. “Thou shalt not kill” is as relevant as ever and will always remain so; it should not be tampered with by human rationalising, even if well intentioned, as history so amply proves.

The Queensland Government would be well advised **not** to follow in the footsteps of Australia's totalitarian leftist governments, particularly on such a serious issue.

#### 5/ “provision of counselling and support services for women.”

At last, this is a serious concern which goes to the heart of a sustainable solution. For too long vulnerable women, often already pressured by partners, even family, “feminists” (sic) and doctors, have been denied all the information and support that a civilised society, a Christian society should provide and - that they rightfully require under ethical medical practice.

This reflects the same **legal principles** enshrined in Workplace OHS legislation, duty of care legislation and many other Acts: all are demonstrably supported by community attitudes.

All involved health-workers should have rights of conscientious objection (see below) but likewise their choice to conduct an abortion or to accede to a woman's request (which often changes anyway) should always be

supported by rigorous medical evidence etc. and that must include a focus on the long term welfare of the mother, the child, his/ her father and even family members like siblings.

This means that women (their babies and even fathers) must benefit from the protections afforded by the facts, especially medical, but also psychological and spiritual. Being shown ultrasound photos, etc. and all the relevant statistics outlining risks such as that of cancer, infertility etc. are necessary, just the start of being able to fully understand what is being proposed in order to give full consent.

Women must be given 'cooling off' periods (as per some contract law) and provided with alternative support mechanisms instead of being bullied into wrongful, drastic treatment (sic) regimes which often make things worse in the short term as well as creating longer lasting deleterious effects.

Doctors, any healthcare worker or abortionist should by law, not be able to proceed with the procedure unless a checklist which satisfies the concerns described above, are met. Of course even that should be considered an unethical compromise by folks with moral conviction, when the intention is to kill the child.

After the abortion, assuming it were freely and legally chosen, it must be a requirement that some follow up is conducted by the doctor to check on the welfare of his/ her client(s) providing certain statistical information to the State so that the State can fulfil its obligations and its requirement to regulate the 'industry' properly; ensuring as it must that at all times that it be illegal to sell body parts to the parasitical corporates (& others) who fill that space. (It should be acknowledged that defying Natural Law as one does when one kills another innocent, necessarily causes evils in other circumstances.)

**So by way of summary:** For the reasons cited above and more, abortion is never morally licit when chosen as an end or means. Informed consent is vitally necessary for medical procedures but abortion goes far further in taking the life of an innocent human being, unable to defend or speak for himself/ herself. Abortion is a significantly more serious matter which should be reflected in the law with greater protections as requested here for the mother and child. The current "legal principle" of bias against the unborn must be nullified.

Pregnancy is a natural occurrence; it is not something that has to be protected against. It is a life affirming opportunity for the individual and the community to grow, spiritually and economically. Even for the very rare (if not impossible) circumstance where it can be definitively shown that the birth of a child would harm the mother, then the only moral course requires that health-workers - by intentions and acts - DO NO HARM to both the mother and baby and that after birth, any extant problems should be solved by other means, eg adoption etc. (Cf; **Menhennitt ruling** ) The intellectually dishonest legal loophole of pretending that a mothers wellbeing is truly threatened should be closed or made far more stringent. How many of these mothers undertake psychological counselling before an abortion? How many mothers get pregnant again and again resorting to killing their child and the child of the father?

The Ten Commandments (an historic expression of Natural Law) which is so uniquely successful in bringing about sustainable moral government and culture, should alone inform the legal principles which then should form the basis of Queensland Law. (Indeed, secular law anywhere; because it alone works to avoid the subsequent many and varied 'family dilemmas' as well as multiple ethical quandaries like the medieval Victorian Totalitarians atrociously overriding a Doctors' Freedom of Conscience; NB [Victorian Abortion Law Reform Act 2008](#).) Any other type of 'legal authority' will be usurped, partial, outside moral standards and so, not be legitimate or for the common good of Queensland, Australia or for the dignity of the human person.

Again, the right to 'conscientious objection' must be preserved indeed, promoted by Governments of all persuasions for the good of the community.

This means that **legally speaking, abortion should remain a crime**, yet notably the Judicial system should be allowed to choose from a range of punishments, which fit the crime but which also focus on the real problems, individual and systemic, reflective of the community based nature of the problem, the lack of appropriate sexual, medical and ethical education.



# Methodology

This study was conducted between Friday 6 May and Sunday 8 May 2016.

The sample comprises 400 voters in Queensland, distributed across the state as follows;

Brisbane	200
Rest of Queensland	200

Galaxy Research designed the questionnaire, the questions from which have been included.

Interviews were conducted using CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing) with telephone numbers randomly selected from telephone lists.

All interviewers were personally trained and briefed on the requirements of the study.

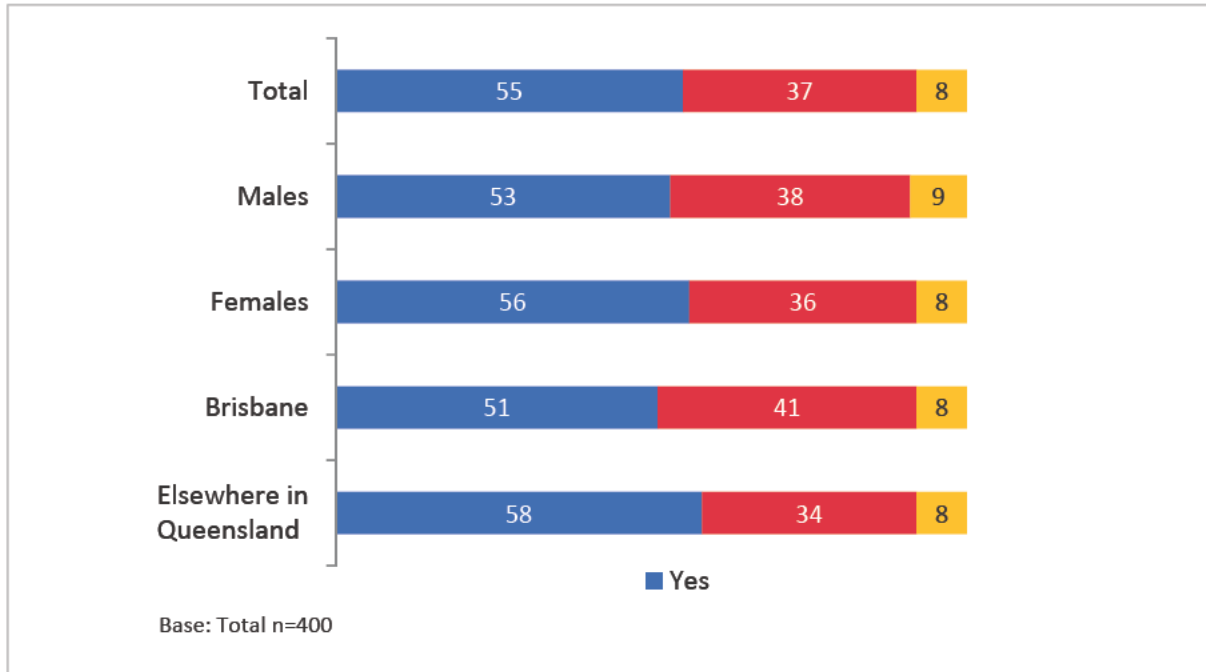
Following the completion of interviewing, the data was weighted by age, gender and area to reflect the latest ABS population estimates.



# Main Findings

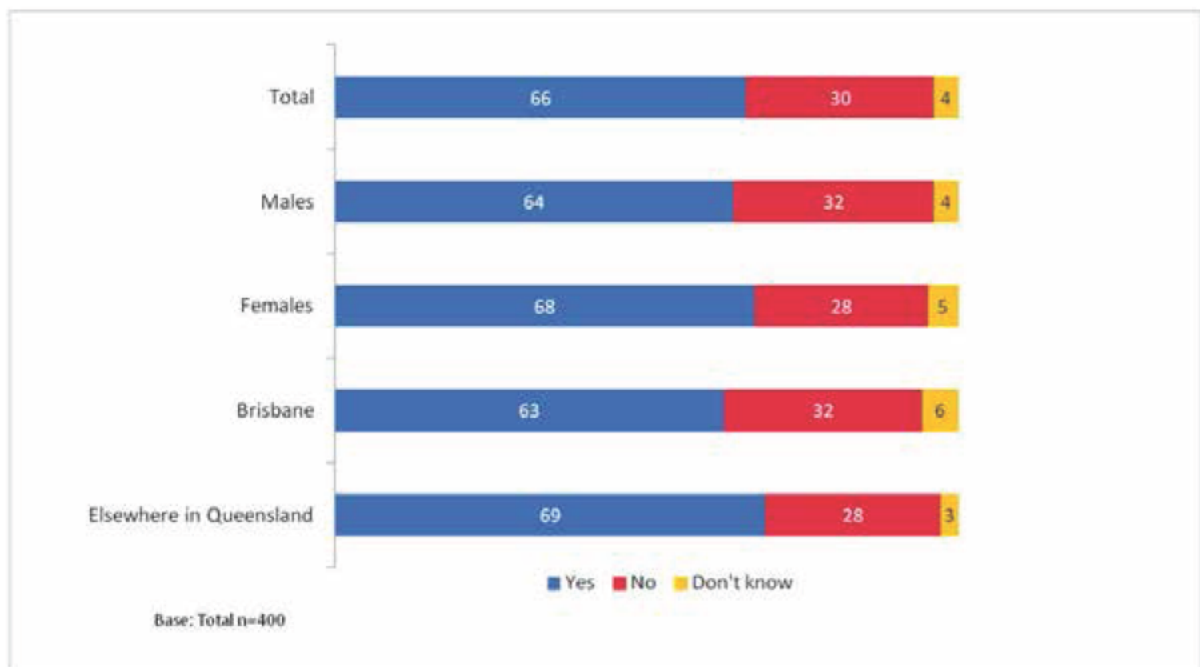
## Definition of human life

**A few questions now about abortion. Abortion is an operation or procedure which involves termination of an unwanted or difficult pregnancy, preventing birth of a live baby. Do you believe abortion involves the taking of a human life?**



Most voters in Queensland (55%) believe abortion involves the taking of a human life. This view is most commonly held by women (56%) and those living in regional and rural Queensland (58%). 37% disagree.

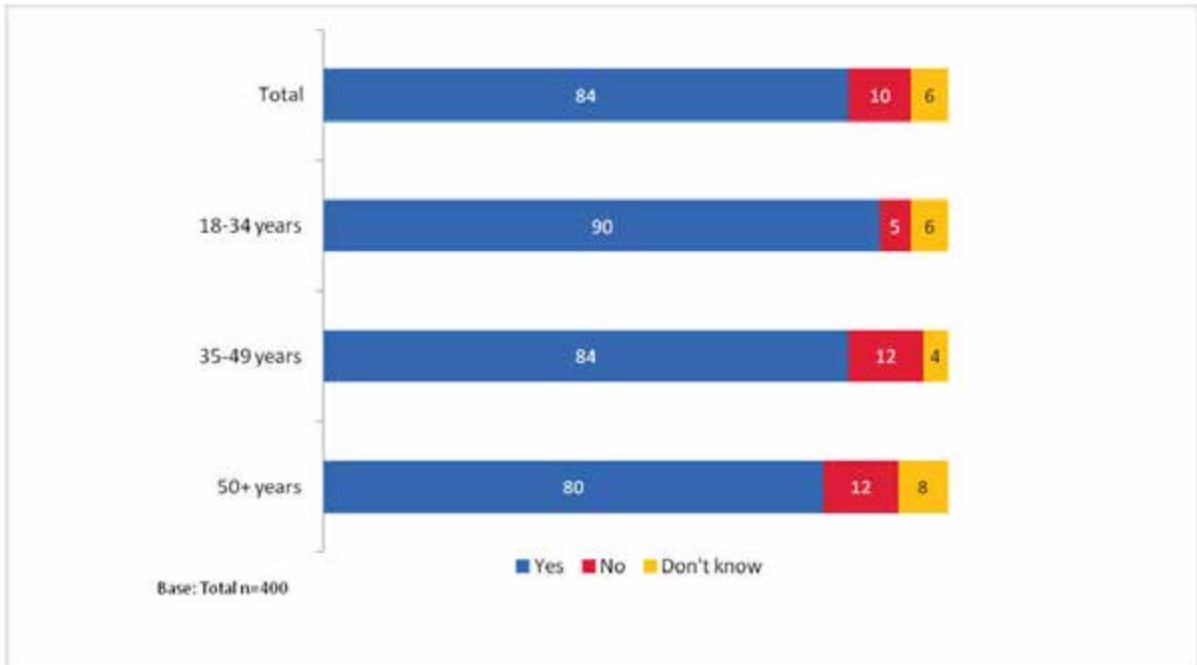
**20 weeks of pregnancy is the earliest point at which survival outside the womb is possible. Do you believe that at that time an unborn baby is a human person with human rights?**



Two-thirds of voters in Queensland (66%) believe that an unborn child at 20 weeks of pregnancy is a human person with human rights. This view is more likely to be held by females (68%) and those living in regional and rural Queensland (69%). 30% disagree.

## Risks to women

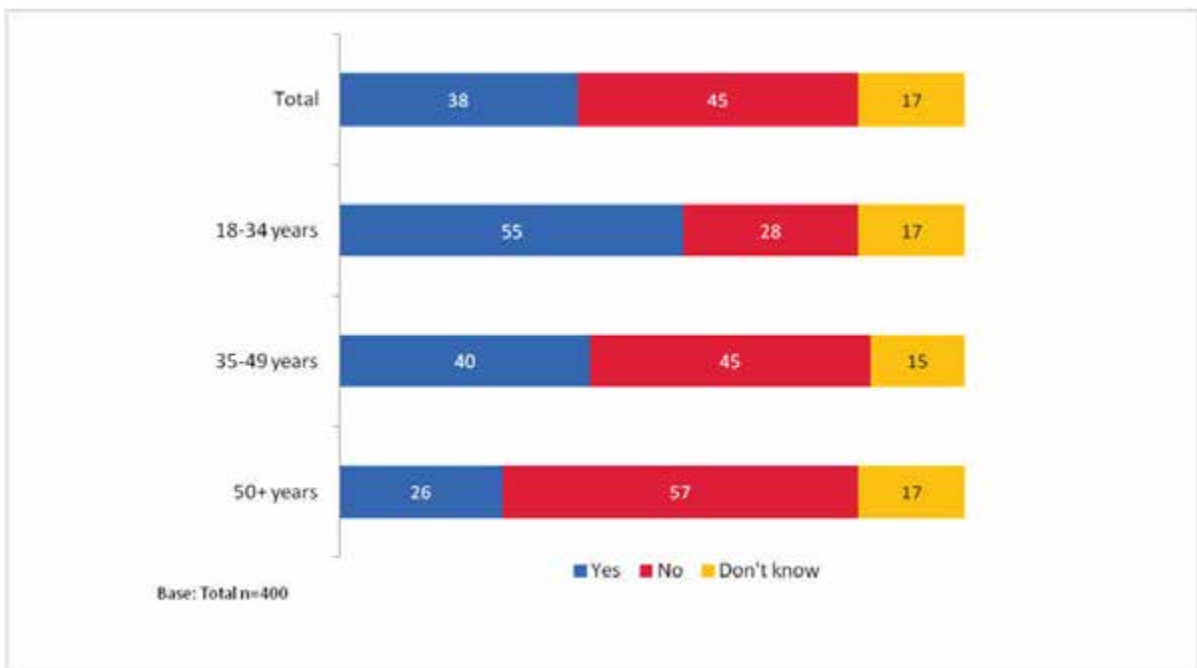
*Do you believe that abortion can harm the physical and/or mental health of a woman?*



It is widely accepted by 84% of Queensland voters that abortion can harm the mental and/or physical health of a woman. Those aged 18-34 years (90%) are the most likely to have concerns about the harm done by abortion to the physical and/or mental health of the woman.

## Circumstances surrounding abortion

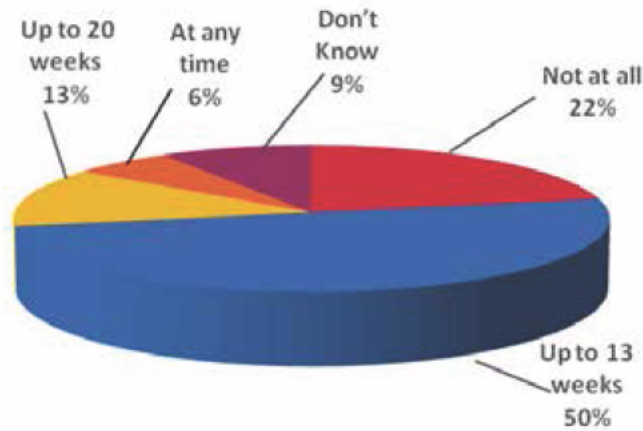
*Research shows that the vast majority of abortions in Australia are performed for social or financial reasons. Do you support abortion in cases where a healthy mother is carrying a healthy unborn baby?*



Almost half of Queensland voters (45%) oppose abortion for social or financial reasons, that is in cases where a healthy mother is carrying a healthy unborn baby. This view is most commonly held by those in the 50+ age group (57%). 38% support abortion under these circumstances and 17% are uncommitted.



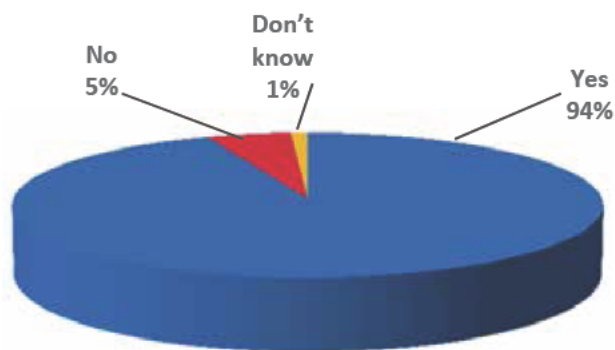
**Up to what stage of pregnancy would you allow abortion, would it be...?**



Most voters in Queensland (72%) would not allow abortion after 13 weeks. This includes 50% that would allow abortion up to 13 weeks and 22% opposed to abortion at any time. 85% of Queensland voters would not allow abortion after 20 weeks. Only 6% support abortion at any time until birth.

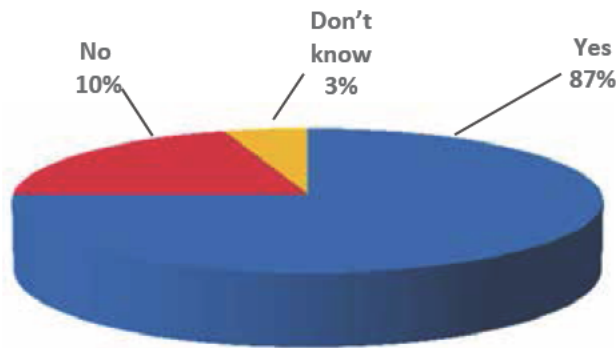
**Decision Making**

*Do you believe that before having an abortion, a woman should receive free independent counselling and information on the development of her unborn baby, the nature of the procedure, the physical and psychological risks of the operation and the alternatives of keeping the baby or adoption, so that she can make a fully informed decision?*



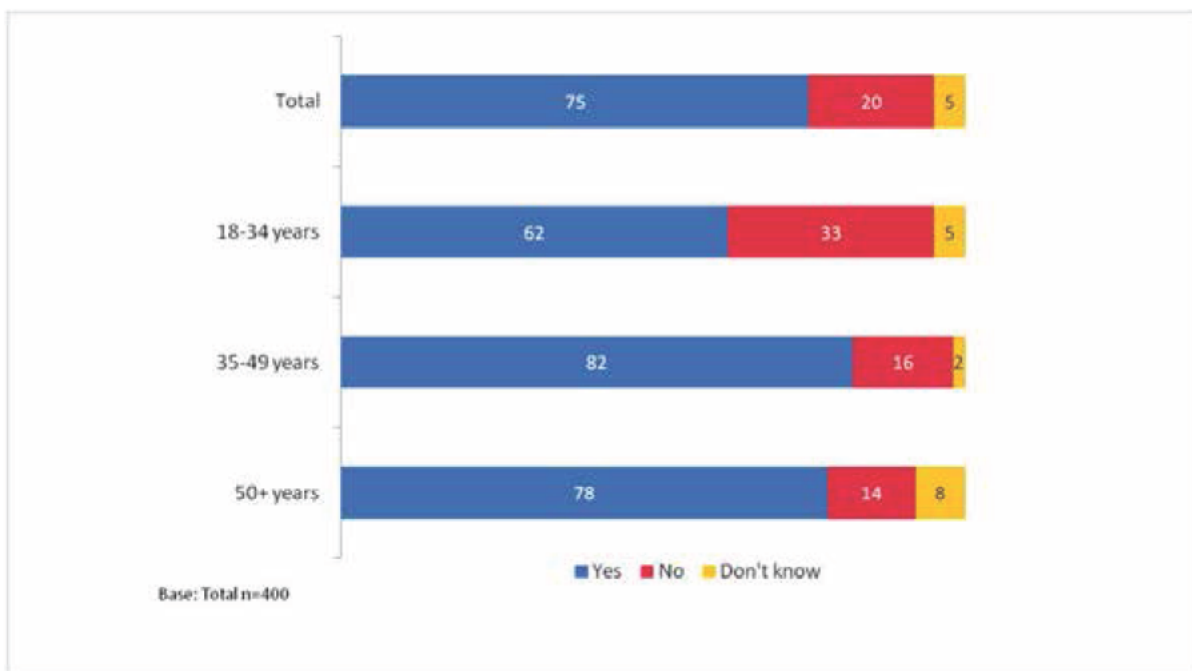
There is widespread belief in Queensland (94%) that before having an abortion a woman should receive free independent counselling and information so that she can make a fully informed decision. Only 5% disagree.

***Do you believe there should be a cooling-off period of several days between making an appointment to have an abortion, and the actual operation?***



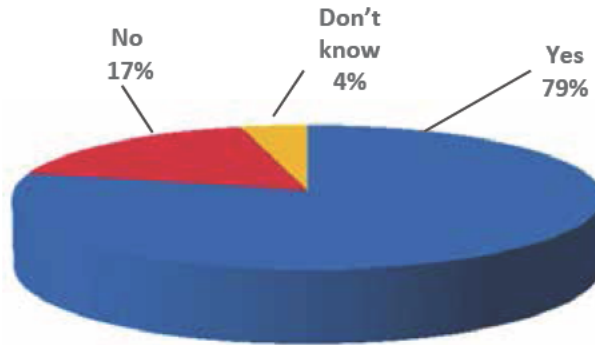
There is also strong support (87%) for a cooling-off period of several days between making an appointment for an abortion and the actual operation. Only 10% disagree.

***Do you believe that parental consent should normally be required for girls under the age of 16 to have an abortion?***



Three-quarters of Queensland voters (75%) believe parental consent should normally be required for girls under the age of 16 to have an abortion. Support is strongest in the 35-49 age group, with 82% agreement. Just 20% of all voters disagree.

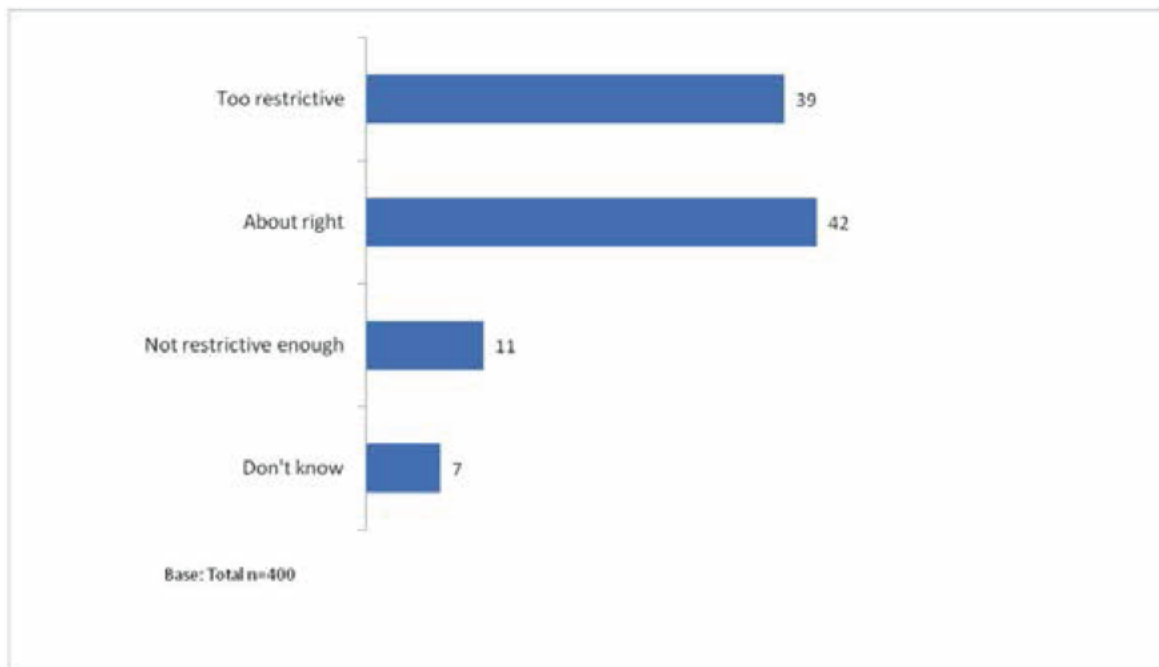
**Do you support conscientious objection provisions to allow doctors and nurses to opt out of having to perform abortion operations against their will?**



Eight in ten voters (79%) support conscientious objection provisions allowing doctors and nurses to opt out of having to perform abortion operations against their will.

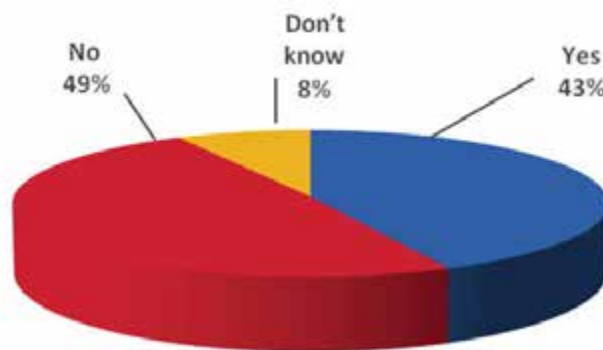
### **Legal Aspects**

**Under the current law about 10,000 abortions are performed each year in Queensland. The Queensland law on abortion, as has been interpreted by the courts, is that abortion is legal only for medical reasons where there is a serious risk to the physical or mental health of a woman. Do you believe the law as it stands is....?**



The community is divided over abortion laws in Queensland with 39% of the opinion that the law as it currently stands is too restrictive but 42% thinking it is about right. A further 11% do not believe the law is restrictive enough.

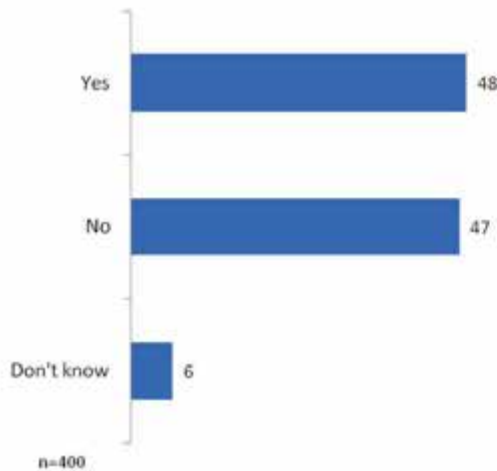
Recently there have been calls for abortion to be decriminalised in Queensland. This would mean that abortion would be legal for any reason until birth. Do you believe that abortion should be decriminalised?



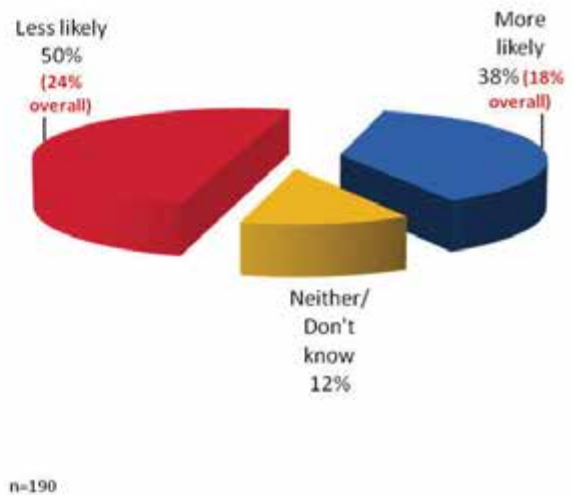
Those that believe abortion should not be decriminalised (49%) outnumber those in favour of the decriminalisation of abortion (43%).

**If your local Member of Parliament voted in favour of decriminalising abortion, would this influence the way you vote at the next state election?**

**If your local Member of Parliament voted in favour of decriminalising abortion would you be more likely or less likely to vote for your Member of Parliament?**



If your local Member of Parliament voted in favour of decriminalising abortion, would this influence the way you vote at the next state election?



If your local Member of Parliament voted in favour of decriminalising abortion would you be more likely or less likely to vote for your Member of Parliament?

Around half of all Queensland voters (48%) say that if their local Member of Parliament voted in favour of decriminalising abortion it would influence their vote. Half of these voters (i.e. 24%) would be *less likely* to vote for their MP, and 38% (i.e. 18%) would be *more likely* to vote for their MP. This suggests a potential average swing of 6% against MPs who vote for decriminalisation of abortion.

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