

From:
To: [abortionlawreform](#)
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Queensland Parliament.

Submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

**In support of the Bill introduced by the Member for Cairns, Mr Rob Pyne MP :
Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016**

Merike Johnson Ph.D.

As a woman, who has had a miscarriage, two children, and an abortion, (in that order) I believe I am qualified to speak on the Bill to amend the Queensland Criminal Code relating to abortion.

There are many different circumstances that lead to an unwanted pregnancy, in my case it was a contraceptive fail. Of course it was a shock, I already had a family, had just undertaken a scientific research project and was progressing well on a career path. The decision to have an abortion was not a "difficult" one and I remember literally floating down the steps of the hospital after the successful termination as I had my life restored to me.

That was over 40 years ago and at that time, to regain control of my life, I had to negotiate a demeaning legal labyrinth. Luckily I had a sympathetic GP who referred me to a psychiatrist, where I had to sneak in by the back door in the early hours of the morning for a certificate (for a fee) to say that I would go mad if I did not have the abortion. Forty years on and nothing much has changed. The current laws in Queensland still criminalise women and their doctors over this personal health issue. This is a private matter, which should have nothing to do with the State.

Mr Pyne's Bill proposes to remove certain Sections from the Criminal Code so that abortion is no longer a crime in Queensland. I urge the Committee to support the Bill.

Dr Merike Johnson