

**From:**  
**To:** [abortionlawreform](#)  
**Subject:** Responding  
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**Attachments:** [14-infop-16June2016.pdf](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)

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My name is Stephanie Maher & I am responding to the investigation regarding the terms related to abortion in Queensland. My phone number is

I believe that the measure of a nation is the way it treats those who are weak and have no voice and therefore I see this as a significant issue and one that should be seen as a measure of our society.

The question of termination of pregnancy relates to our beliefs about the value of human life, and at what age we consider a child (including an unborn child) to be a human being.

As a society we, in Australia, would generally consider the value of human life to be very high, being signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a mother I have experienced the superior high level of care our medical establishment go to protect the life of my own unborn child who was at risk at 23 weeks gestation. Our termination of pregnancy policies, legal principles and laws should reflect this high value we place on human life.

While different states place a different timeline for considering when termination of pregnancy is legal, whatever the time set (16 weeks or 24 weeks etc), it should be clearly before the baby could survive by itself. If a baby's life can be saved even when born prematurely at 24-28weeks, this reflects our valuing of that child, and our termination of pregnancy laws should reflect this also. It only makes sense to be consistent about how an unborn child is treated.

Certainly factors around the danger to a woman's life can be taken into consideration.

Because there are differences in people's moral beliefs, health providers should be able to make choices about their involvement in termination of pregnancy. The Hippocratic oath reflects nearly two thousand years of western medical practitioners' commitment to doing no harm (and even specifically abortion). For those who consider a foetus to be an unborn child, a human life, they should certainly be given the choice to maintain their commitment to not harming that life.

It is important that women are given the facts. When women are given a chance to explore their own responses and those of others to their pregnancy, in a context of confidentiality and no judgement, they are more likely to make decisions in keeping with their own highest desires and morality. Counselling which does not try to persuade the counsellee, but allows exploration of issues, is essential for a person who is facing questions about termination. Research has shown that when women are well informed of the actual development of the foetus, they are much less likely to choose an abortion. This is significant.

As a woman I understand the challenges faced by women and the huge

sacrifices that mothers must make whether or not they raise a child they have brought into the world. Nonetheless I do not believe that the rights of a woman should extend to the termination of another life which could indeed survive outside the womb given the right care.

Thank you

Stephanie Maher