

Dear Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee members,

I work in a university, where my current responsibilities include teaching in the area of public policy and administration.

I have followed with interest the introduction of the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*, because I support decriminalisation of abortion, but I did not consider it necessary to make a submission to the Committee when it was considering that bill. I have, however, taken note of the Committee's report on the Bill and in particular, of the Committee's comments with regard to the introduction of the Bill as a matter of public policy development.

The Committee's comments about consultation about policy and the use of the legislative process to formulate policy reflect the views of public policy academics with regard to the ideal policy process. Nonetheless, the same academics generally accept that the ideal is rarely achieved; some argue that this ideal cannot be achieved where the policy issue is controversial and, instead, political processes will carry forward policy development (see, for example: Sophia Everett, "The Policy Cycle: Democratic Process or Rational Paradigm Revisited?" *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 62 (2) 2003).

In introducing a Bill to decriminalise abortion, Mr Pyne was not the relevant Minister and did not have access to the resources and support in policy development provided by the public service. He could not, therefore, be reasonably expected to conduct an ideal policy process. However, he has responded to his constituents and sought to get rid of anachronistic legislation. With his second, related, Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016, taken in conjunction with the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*, he has addressed what the Committee's consultation process has revealed as concerns.

Thus, although by means other than those normally used by government, the policy process – problem identification, consultation and formulation – has proceeded towards achieving effective public policy. I look forward to the Committee's report supporting consideration of the two Bills together by Parliament and in this respect advancing Queensland law in support of women's health.

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