

Abortion 3

**Submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services, and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee
on the Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016**

Policy objectives of the Bill : The Explanatory Notes state that these are:

The Bill will improve clarity for health professionals and patients in the area of medical termination of pregnancy. There currently exists a lack of clarity around what point during gestation and for what reasons a termination of pregnancy may be performed in Queensland. The Bill seeks to clarify when care can be imparted and to avoid prolonged approval and ethics processes (not conducted for the benefit of patients' wellbeing but to substantiate lawfulness).

Your Committee held a Public Briefing, 21st September 2016 - part of your Committee's examination of this Private Member's Bill – the aim of which is the same as its predecessor (Womens Right to Choose).

The one clear message out of that examination was :

- * that the purpose of both Bills is to achieve abortion on demand ; and
- * that the Member who is moving these Bills does not understand the complexities inherent in implementation - the ethical, financial, widely-impacting consequences for Government, individuals and all the collective groups affected. ; and
- * that good public policy must uphold community standards and be a measured response to considerable evidence-based representations for change..

Our State Minister of Health has acknowledged to Parliament that abortion is dealing with human lives; that abortion extinguishes that life.
Taking life is a criminal offence.

Our current law offers nominal protection to the baby.

This Bill, and its predecessor, seeking abortion on demand, offers no protection at all for new life – radically altering the public concept of right and wrong.
Legalising a social evil does not minimize its harm.. In fact, a society which does so changes fundamentally in terms of ethics, its medical ethos, its family relationships, and its principles of human life. Abortion is. the ultimate Family Violence. Our visible society continues to become more violent.

An act which terminates life is not just, by definition, a private affair; not just about a patient's rights. It is a public, society-wide issue because it involves the State legalizing killing subject to certain condition – as Paul Kelly wrote recently in the Australian newspaper. And this applies to such acts at both the beginning and end of life.

Human beings are good at rationalizing and justifying our actions and decisions, especially our political representatives when they are taking those actions and decisions which are based on false and misleading assumptions - reflecting ideological and political propositions, rather than objective reasoning.

Mr. Pyne admitted the very narrow base from which this Bill – and its predecessor – grew. A small group in Cairns, aligned with Pro-choice groups; activists Dr. Caroline de Costa, Carla Gorton and Dr. Heather McNamee; and some pro-choice groups in Brisbane. There is no groundswell for it. In fact, the most recent poll indicated a possible 6% loss of support for any Member who does support it.

Finally, neither Bill is concerned with providing an educative process on this issue. It is unfortunate that abortion is simply not discussed in the secular media. There have been many excellent submissions by people from both sides of the issue, which – if printed in the wider media - in themselves would make a wonderful contribution to educating society generally to a less superficial level. To my knowledge, the excellent articles published in the Queensland Catholic Leader since June are the only means of dealing with the issue for the wider public. I congratulate the Leader.

I hope both this Bill, and its predecessor, will be rejected totally.

Thank you for your consideration of this Submission.

Mrs.) Bridget McCullagh

6th October 2016

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