

**Health (Abortion Law Reform)  
Amendment Bill 2016**

**Submission No. 1157  
Received 6 Oct 2016**

**From:**  
**To:** [Abortion Bill](#)  
**Subject:** In support of Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016  
**Date:** Thursday, 6 October 2016 12:40:56 PM

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Dear Committee,

I support the decriminalisation of abortion in Queensland, and the repeal of sections 224, 225 and 226 from our 1899 Criminal Code. I made a submission supporting the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016* when it came before you for inquiry, and stand by the evidence and opinions I laid out within that.

I believe the evidence considered by the Committee in your previous inquiry supports the measures laid out in this supplementary piece of legislation. I also believe that the proposed reforms laid out in this new bill should address the Committee's concerns with a straight repeal of our Criminal Code statutes.

I support all the measures included in the *Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill*, but recognise that in and of itself this bill does not decriminalise abortion, only provide legislative regulation around specific practice issues like conscientious objection and gestation.

I am particularly supportive of the concept of legislated exclusion zones to protect patients and staff from harassment outside health facilities providing abortion. I was lucky enough to access my abortion through a GP, so had to deal with none of the intimidation and judgement I have heard about from several women I know who attended specific abortion clinics and had to make their way past protesters with signs and leaflets and prayer books to get their procedure. This behaviour appalls me, and while I believe in the right of every individual to their own opinion about abortion, I also believe exclusion zone legislation does not violate this. People are still free to express their opposition to abortion absolutely anywhere they choose, except for within a specified distance of a clinic. If you are opposed to abortion and want to protest it being legal and available, the appropriate place to do this is outside parliament, not on the steps of an abortion clinic. I would also urge the Committee to recommend an expansion of the distance specified in this bill to 150m, to bring it into line with Victoria and Tasmania.

The report into the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill* listed several impacts of the current legislation on the health and equity of Queenslanders, including the lack of consistency in public hospital provision of abortion, the barriers to access experienced by disadvantaged populations, and the fact that continuing to criminalise abortion is both out of step with community expectation and clinical practice, and puts us at odds with our international human rights obligations.

**Given this, I support the *Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill*, but only in conjunction with the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill*.**

In addition, I urge the Committee to recommend that both bills are debated and voted on together as a package on the floor of parliament, to reflect the intent of the two pieces of legislation. The two bills together, if passed as a package, would bring Queensland law into line with Victoria's in relation to abortion. The Victorian model is supported by a wide range of

professional organisations with experience in this area, including the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and provides an excellent working model on which to base Queensland's legislative approach.

Thanks for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

Regards,

Kate Marsh