

Inquiry Secretary
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

5/10/2016

Dear Sir,

As a General Practitioner for over 30 years in Melbourne, Victoria, I am gravely concerned that the proposed QLD Abortion Law Reform Bill gives no protection at all to women who are pregnant up to 24 weeks. In this sense it is identical to the 2008 Victorian Abortion Law Act which is in force here at present.

About 4 years ago I was requested by a couple for referral for abortion. The woman was 19 weeks pregnant and the reason for the request was because they had discovered the baby was a girl when they had the routine 19 week ultrasound. I refused, but the abortion was carried out in any case 1 week later.

Subsequently I reported the doctor who did the abortion to the Medical Board (AHPRA) for unprofessional conduct because he had not performed the abortion for medical reasons but for gender selection. After their investigation they wrote to me: *"the Medical Board of Australia decided to take no action.... The board decided this because " The abortion law reform act 2008 allows a medical practitioner to perform an abortion on a woman who is not more than 24 weeks pregnant. It is considered that based on the information provided it was not unprofessional for Dr ...(I have withheld the name)... to have performed a legal abortion for a woman who was 19 weeks pregnant."*

A few weeks later I received another letter from the Medical Board stating that I was under investigation, specifically that:

".....the board is concerned that you may have

- 1. failed in your obligation to refer a female patient seeking treatment or advice on abortion to not objecting practitioner.*
- 2. demonstrated a disregard for your obligations as a medical practitioner.*
- 3 .demonstrated disregard for patient's rights."*

After an investigation over the next 8 months the Medical Board formally cautioned me.

I have full documentation of this and would be willing to present this to you in a confidential setting.

If this proposed legislation goes ahead, as it is identical to the 2008 Victorian Abortion Law, not only will women in Queensland continue be at the mercy of coercive partners and unscrupulous doctors but this will be **with legal sanction**.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Mark Hobart,

