

Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023

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By online submission

Health and Environment Committee
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets, Brisbane, Qld, 4000

Re: Inquiry in to the *Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 - Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and Criminal Code Act 1899*

14 December 2023

Dear Committee,

[ASHM Health](http://ashm.org.au) (ASHM) formerly known as Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine welcomes the amendments to the *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018* and *Criminal Code Act 1899* which are in line with the recommendations in our previous submission and acknowledges the invitation to make a submission on the draft Bill.

ASHM is a peak professional body representing healthcare professionals working in blood-borne viruses and sexual and reproductive health. We partner without prejudice, working collaboratively to develop workforce capacity and strengthen health systems to uphold the dignity and rights of people facing stigma and barriers to care.

An independent community of practice, ASHM is a trusted public health organisation and accredited charity that develops resources and guidelines, delivers training, runs conferences, and advocates passionately for the needs of our members and communities. Our members and supporters are clinicians, nurses, community organisers, policy makers, health promoters, medical students, researchers, health administrators, and specialists—all united to improve the wellbeing of our diverse communities.

ASHM supports each of the amendments outlined in the Bill:

1. Allow additional health practitioners to perform early medical terminations of pregnancy through the use of termination drugs.
 - i. The inclusion of additional registered health practitioners as prescribers and/or suppliers of an Australian registered termination of pregnancy medicine such as MS-2Step to perform early medical terminations of pregnancy in Queensland supports safe, timely and accessible care for people wanting to terminate an early pregnancy.
2. Make consequential amendments to the offence provision set out in the Criminal Code to align with the above change.
 - i. Healthcare professionals need to provide the care required by the community without fear of committing an offence carrying legislative repercussions.
3. Provide for more inclusive language by replacing references to 'woman' with 'person' in termination of pregnancy provisions.



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- i. The adoption of inclusive language is a necessary amendment to the legislation. It aligns with the expressed needs of LGBTQI communities, and with ASHM's position in support of inclusive language. ASHM acknowledges concerns expressed by certain stakeholders but is not in agreement with their concerns.
- ii. Inclusive language within the legislation should be reinforced by education and resources developed to support the health professional workforce to implement the legislative changes.

ASHM supports health practitioners to work to their full scope of practice within legislative guidelines and is supportive of the Bill including amendments to the *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018* and *Criminal Code Act 1899*, to remove criminal liability for assisting and prescribing termination, and increasing access to medical termination of pregnancy care and services.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Kind regards,



Alexis Apostolellis
Chief Executive Officer
ASHM Health

