

Question on Notice

No. 1564

Asked on 31 October 2018

MS S BOLTON ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the *Adoption Act 2009*—

Will the Attorney-General advise of any plans to bring forward a review of the adoption laws within Queensland in response to components of the current laws being identified as a contributing factor in the decision making process to terminate a pregnancy?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Noosa for her question.

The Palaszczuk Government is proud to have delivered its commitment to modernise the law governing the termination of pregnancy based on the recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission (QLRC). These reforms recognise termination of pregnancy as a health matter and affirm the Government's commitment to respecting the rights and autonomy of women.

Termination is never an easy option for women and is not a decision made lightly, but all women in Queensland should have the right to make this decision for themselves and without fear of criminal prosecution.

The *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018* will commence on 3 December 2018. Queensland Health will be rolling out a comprehensive implementation plan for health professionals. This includes establishing a women's helpline, so that all Queensland women will have access to trusted information from Queensland Health about their rights and the support and services available to them.

I note that the QLRC did not specifically make any recommendations relating to Queensland's adoption laws.

In chapter 6 of its report, the QLRC considered the provision of counselling services for women and stated that counselling is adequately and appropriately addressed by current clinical practice and guidelines relevant to the provision of termination services. This includes providing 'accurate, impartial and easy to understand information' about all options such as parenting the child, placing the child for adoption or terminating the pregnancy, and post-termination considerations such as contraception and counselling.

As adoption and administration of the *Adoption Act 2009* (other than Part 14A which relates to proceedings before the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal) fall within the administrative responsibility of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, it is a matter for the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence to determine if a review of that Act should happen.