



Hugh McDermott MP

STATE MEMBER FOR PROSPECT

13th August 2019

The Hon Shayne Mallard MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Social Issues
Legislative Council
The Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Chair

Re: Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019

Since Tuesday, 30th July 2019 I have received over 600 emails and 53 telephone calls expressing views on the important issues encompassed in the *Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019* (*the Bill*) and the issues associated with its enactment. I have also been handed a Petition opposing *the Bill's* introduction containing 424 signatures.

I continue to receive emails and phone calls and expect the number of persons, from the Prospect Electorate, expressing views on *the Bill* to be significantly more than the above number as the matter proceeds through the Legislative Council.

I have also held a number of meetings with ethnic and community organisations, religious leaders and church members, human rights organisations, women's right organisations, medical practitioners and paramedics.

As the State Member for Prospect, my priority is to represent the views expressed to me by my community—namely those persons, families and organisations within the Electorate of Prospect. Further, my priority must also be to consider the impact that *the Bill* and related government policies may have on the lives of the community in the Prospect Electorate.

To date the overwhelming view of local community members that have contact me are opposed to *the Bill*. The approximate breakdown of those expressing views are:

15 persons supporting the Bill;

794 persons opposed to the Bill.

For your information and review, I have attached copies of the 332 emails (Tabs 1 and 2) that I have received from persons living within the Electorate of Prospect and a copy of the Petition opposing *the Bill* (Tab 3).

The views expressed by persons living within the Prospect Electorate that are opposed to *the Bill* can be narrowed to 6 main areas of concern with the content or effect of *the Bill*, namely:

1. A concern that *the Bill* will permit a late term abortion after the 22 week gestation period. The key issue being that the embryo/baby is considered viable, capable of sustaining life outside of the womb at that later stage of development.
2. That sex-selective abortion will be permitted;
3. Medical practitioners must have a right to conscientious objection, and that right must be protected;
4. The foetus/unborn child must be protected, have legal rights and not treated as a lesser human being;
5. Counselling should be provided so that cases of domestic violence and coercion can be identified;
6. All life, whether born or unborn, holds intrinsic value and worth.

The views expressed by persons living within the Prospect electorate that support *the Bill* have 3 key reasons for support:

1. Abortion is not a moral issue but a healthcare issue;
2. Decriminalising abortion is an issue of healthcare, and of a woman's dignity;
3. Women have a right to decide and chose whether or not to have an abortion.

I ask that you give consideration to the issues raised in this submission concerning the *Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019* and investigate what measures need to be taken to resolve my constituent's concerns.

I will make myself available if the Committee wishes me be to appear to provide oral evidence and answer any questions that arise from the submission.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh McDermott MP
State Member for Prospect