

**Submission  
No 7**

**INQUIRY INTO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE  
REFORM BILL 2019**

**Organisation:** Solidarityau  
**Date Received:** 12 August 2019

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# Solidarity!

*Assisting health care workers and students to practice according to their conscience.*

## Submission on Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 to Legislative Council Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit an opinion on the proposed Reproductive Health Care Bill 2019. A conference sponsored by our group held at UNSW on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, attended by over 60 healthcare students and workers, expressed concern over the content of this Bill and process of how it is being debated.

There was concern about the content especially in regard to Section 9 which deals with conscientious objection. There are reasonable grounds for having a conscientious objection to termination. In each termination, a human being loses their life. The Bill effectively removes our right of conscientious objection to termination.

There is a misunderstanding about how conscientious objection works in the Bill. Doctors refer to a colleague when they recognize special specific care is needed in a particular case, but they do not have the specific skills needed. A colleague with those special skills is then asked by the referring doctor to provide that special care. At all times the referring doctor is responsible for the care given.

This Bill requires conscientious objectors to transfer care in a compulsory manner to someone who they know will do the act that they object to. This referral consents to and takes responsibility for that act. This is an impingement of the conscientious objector's right to object and defeats the purpose of having a conscientious objection. This discriminates against the conscientious objector.

**Referral is not needed for termination in NSW. No woman requesting an abortion has been denied because of a conscientious objector. The law is therefore unnecessary and discriminates against conscientious objectors. We want objectors protected. Please delete Section 9 as it stands.**

There was also concern about the process of how the Bill is being debated. This is being rushed unnecessarily. The law has been around a long time. Other states had committees and parliamentary enquiries which gave the decision to decriminalize more standing. This rush decreases the chance for mature debate and appropriate community consultation over such a big issue. It is the powerful imposing their agenda and is therefore undemocratic. It is ironic that parliamentarians are using their right of a vote along conscience grounds to remove that right from their health care constituents.

More about Solidarity - Solidarity is a group of over 100 NSW health care students and workers who understand that quality health care is best delivered by people who practice according their conscience and support each other in how they practice. Conscientious objection has led to great health outcomes eg William Wilberforce and the abolition of slavery.