

**Submission
No 9**

INQUIRY INTO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Organisation: Pregnancy Help Australia Ltd

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Submission to the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill
2019 NSW **12th August 2019**

Pregnancy Help Australia [PHA] is the national association of Pregnancy Help agencies around Australia. PHA has been serving agencies for 40 years. As a current director and past president of PHA, current worker at Genesis Pregnancy Support Inc and registered nurse I appreciate this opportunity to make a submission to the NSW parliament in relation to the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019.

In the Reform Bill there appears to be no recognition of the life of the child, which our organisation believes begins at conception. Nor, the devastating impact that Post Abortion Grief has in the lives of many women, or the impact on medical practitioners involved in the termination of babies' lives.

It is concerning that any medical practitioner would be able to perform a termination up to 22 weeks gestation, as there are significant risks to women if practitioners are unfamiliar with this procedure. The 'informed consent' of the woman is currently not guaranteed and this bill does not go far enough to ensure full information, including risks, both physical and psychological are supplied and a sufficient cooling off period, with counselling to assist women in this difficult decision.

Medical practitioners should certainly have the right to conscientious objection without fear of recriminations or adverse impact on their careers. They should not be forced to refer to another abortion provider.

In regards to later term abortions; with our high standard of health care in Australia abortion should not be necessary in any circumstance. Early birth of the child can be managed with neonatal care and the mother's condition treated. Open adoption and fostering options are also available.

Prevention of gender selection must be ensured. It is absolutely abhorrent that a civilised country such as Australia should ever have to deal with this issue.

It would be far better to provide the necessary support required by the woman. PHA agencies provide practical support to women facing an unplanned pregnancy, domestic violence, homelessness and other issues. In many cases this support enables the woman to continue her pregnancy, which is often her preferred option.

PHA would like there to be a much stronger provision for informed consent and protection against coercion, as we hear many first hand experiences of coercion to abort from partners, families and sadly medical practitioners.

Post Abortion Grief needs to be recognised and formal support services offered, as this grief is real, but so often not openly expressed due to shame, guilt, regret or fear of reprisal.

Yours sincerely

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**Pregnancy Help
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