



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

---

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING  
Mr Johnathan Davis (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Michael Petterson MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT

**Submission Number: 001**

**Date Authorised for Publication: 9 August 2022**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [LA Committee - HCW](#)  
**Subject:** New inquiry into abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT  
**Date:** Wednesday, 27 July 2022 3:17:29 PM

---

**Caution:** This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

**RE: New inquiry into abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT**

I am writing my submission in response to the New Inquiry into abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT. This is my personal story. I give permission for my submission to be published in full, but request that you remove my last name, phone number and address from the online publication.

From 2016 to 2017 I tried to have a baby through IVF. It took many goes to get pregnant and it was a traumatic and difficult process. There were many medications, and it was financially really straining. But we wanted to have a baby more than anything, so we persevered.

In 2017, I fell pregnant and I've never felt happier than when I got the call informing me that the test was positive. However, at my first scan the doctor had devastating news. They could not find a heartbeat and I had had a miscarriage. Unfortunately this is a very common story.

Because I had an incomplete miscarriage, I needed medical treatment to remove any remaining tissue from my uterus. I was advised that I could get severe infection and other complications if the tissue wasn't removed.

First I tried medication. I had severe cramping, I felt faint and had really intense pain. I ended up at the emergency room, but the tissue still didn't leave my body. As the medication had failed, the next option was a procedure called a dilation and curettage. Dilation and curettage (D&C) is a routine procedure where a doctor uses a special medical instrument to scrape the contents of the uterus. It removes fetal tissue and products of conception so the body can return to its pre-pregnancy state.

In the ACT, the Canberra Hospital is the only public hospital that performs this procedure. I investigated going to the Canberra Hospital, but at the time the waiting period was several months. The doctors advised me that the risk of complications would increase significantly if I waited until I could have the treatment performed at the Canberra Hospital. In addition, being pregnant without a viable baby was very emotionally difficult. I wanted to have this procedure done as quickly as possible, so that I could progress with my life and begin the grieving process.

I was advised that Calvary Public Hospital refused to perform D&Cs, because this hospital had religious objections. Therefore, I had to spend lots of money (in excess of \$1000) having this procedure performed at a private hospital. I don't think it's acceptable that in this day and age, a public hospital can refuse an essential and often life saving procedure needed by thousands of women. If Calvary Hospital wants to refuse to perform these procedures, it should not be in receipt of taxpayers funds.

I am lucky that I had the money to pay for the procedure privately, but not all women will

be so lucky. A D&C or abortion, is always an emotionally difficult procedure. Whether the baby is wanted or not, women do not get this procedure lightly. It's medically invasive, it hurts, and is really confronting. The least we can do as a society, is to make sure women can access it for free and with no waiting periods. They also shouldn't be demonised by public hospitals for needing this procedure. I don't want any other women to have to go through what I did. While women will unfortunately continue to need D&Cs, we can at least support them to make the process as easy as possible.

Canberra is a welcoming and progressive community. We can do better, and we should do better.

Kind regards

Tamara [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]