



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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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: 06**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [LA Committee - HCW](#)  
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To the Standing Committee on Health And Community Wellbeing,  
A.C.T. Legislative Assembly GPO Box Canberra ACT 2601.

Please accept my submission below.

The Committee would be aware of the proposal to provide some \$2million in funding for the provisions of abortion in the ACT. This is a puzzling proposal as the sole provider is the clinic in Civic run by Marie Stopes Australia a branch of Marie Stopes International, a very profitable majority provider of abortion worldwide.

The ACT Stopes clinic should at first instance reasonably be presumed to run profitably. It currently pays nominal rent for its premises in a prime public health building in the CBD. The Committee might give some attention to an article which appeared in the *Canberra Times* on 10 August 2022 (at page 34) by Mr Jamal Hakim, managing director of Marie Stopes Australia. In a plea for contributions to a fund which assists in payment for abortions he makes various claims.

With respect for his right to express such opinions his article is a farrago of inaccuracies and special pleadings. He asserts that there is a “quagmire of legislation” making abortions hard to access? There is no legislation governing abortion since passage of the ‘Wayne Berry Bill’ in 2002 which removed any reference to abortion from ACT criminal law.

Then he states that his company’s ACT business faces “workplace shortages”; this in turn means extra expense for flying in operatives from outside the ACT. Could it be that few doctors here wish to be involved in this trade? Or is there a decline in demand overall? If so, should the public purse prop up declining profits?

His estimate of costs “up to \$8000” for an abortion demands closer examining. How would the performance of a relatively simple procedure (in the case of first trimester abortions which constitute the great majority of surgical abortions) cost “up to \$8000”? Does this indicate over-charging? Or does it indicate that the Marie Stopes CIVIC clinic is performing late-term abortions? Numerous polls here and overseas find these are abhorrent to most people.

Abortions attract Medicare rebates. Would this ACT branch of a very rich international abortion business consider bulk-billing to help clients avoid paying the 'gap'?

There is certainly a need for better provision for women's special health needs. Only recently our local press has recounted the terrible suffering, inconveniences and financial losses of women having to travel to Sydney or Newcastle for the treatment of certain gynaecological cancers. Again, there was a recent report of a looming shortage of midwives in the Canberra Hospital. Let's get our health funding priorities right.

I respectfully urge the Committee to avoid acceding in its recommendations to special pleadings from a private business provider; and, rather, to carefully consider the immediate, urgent needs of providing better funding for the areas in women's health mentioned in this submission.

Kath Woolf

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