



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
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Mr Michael Petterson MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - HCW](#)
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Dear Committee members,

I am writing in response to the request for submissions to your inquiry.

One of the terms of reference is “access to information to support a variety of possible reproductive choices, including choosing to give birth. I believe encouraging women to choose to give birth should be the major emphasis of this inquiry. There are many things which can be done in this jurisdiction to encourage women to give birth.

Firstly, we can address the housing crisis which we are experiencing, by making more land available, to help make housing cheaper. We can encourage the building of more housing, including social housing; and we can subsidise rents to help the lowly paid.

Secondly, we can charge Marie Stopes International market rent and the money raised could be given to Karinya House to assist pregnant women, in need, to keep their babies.

Thirdly, at least some of the money which is being spent on trying to extend the light rail system to Woden could be used to encourage women to continue with pregnancy rather than abort.

Fourthly, we need to address indirect costs such as transport, leave from work and particularly childcare to assist women to choose to give birth.

Australia-wide we face labour shortages. One of the reasons why is abortion. We can't continue to depend on immigration to meet these shortages. We need to encourage women to have more children, not fewer, to go through with pregnancies, not abort.

Adoption is an alternative to abortion which should be encouraged. There are many couples who would be prepared to adopt if that option was more readily available. Adoption would be much cheaper and less traumatic for a childless couple than going through IVF.

Nowhere in the terms of reference do you mention the effect of abortion on the mental health of women. Counselling services will tell you that women who have

abortions suffer from post-abortion grief. Melinda Tankard Reist wrote a book "Giving Sorrow Words: Women's Stories of Grief After Abortion."

Re legal protections for abortion rights in the ACT, interactions with non-ACT legislative instruments (e.g.: with Commonwealth law). There is no mention as to whether our abortion laws meet our international obligations under international law such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. How does the ACT Human Rights Charter meet the terms of these instruments given that it doesn't even recognise the existence of the pre-born?

Re the effectiveness of exclusion zones. Your committee, or another committee, should be looking at how this legislation fits into the ACT Human Rights charter. The exclusion zone around the Marie Stopes facility is denying people the right to protest, peacefully, in proximity to an abortion facility, on the false premise that these people are causing a public nuisance. I'm not sure how that works given that the people who used to protest were actually praying and also seeking to inform women, seeking an abortion, that there is an alternative and that help is available.

Finally, although the terms of reference do mention supporting those women who choose to give birth, in general, this inquiry is heavily biased towards abortion. This needs to change.

Yours sincerely,

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