



**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: 38**

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## More than 1,000 patients overdue for elective surgery

"The emergency department is really challenging and it has been a challenge for a long time, both at Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital," Ms Stephen-Smith acknowledged.

"Our target — and the national target — is 70 per cent. We are nowhere near that at this point in time. We want to get to that target within nine months.

Canberra emergency department wait times are the worst in the country, but the Health Minister says she'll fix it in nine months  
(ABC News update Feb 2021)

### **ACT Coroner examining death of five-year-old girl at Canberra Hospital. (Channel 9 "Current Affair" 10 August, carried the story.)**

Posted Tue 26 Jul 2022 at 5:03pm Tuesday 26 Jul 2022 at 5:03pm, updated Tue 26 Jul 2022 at 5:53pmt (ABC News)

These are the news items that cause real concern. And there are numerous similar items in various news broadcasts.

Why is this Standing Committee inquiring into Abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT when the public, **with statistics to back their worries**, are crying out for attention to be turned to the day to day Medical problems -Emergency waiting times and Elective Surgery, among others.

Marie Stopes Clinic in the ACT Health building has been acting as the Government's agency providing Abortion and Reproductive Choice from the perspectives nominated in five headings on the Committee's Terms of Reference Statement. Marie Stopes promotes their services with their handouts and advertisements.

Then ACT Right to Life Association Incorporated, has pursued the matter of statistics on Abortion for many years – through Members in the Chamber- but no statistics on Abortion have been available to the public whatsoever in recent years. Lives saved through the Osborne amendment. Health Reg. (Maternal Health Bill )1998. This pause (a compulsory pause of 3 days

before an intended Abortion) had an intended effect – Some women with an “Unwanted pregnancy” changed their minds! This was not good enough for the new regime. The compulsory waiting time prior to an abortion was dismissed by the new Legislative Assembly and the ACT was soon to have decriminalized Abortion up to time of Birth.

**Statistics are the basis of all human relationships and that without them no one can develop valid arguments.**

Our Association would prefer the Standing Committee to investigate a positive approach to an “unplanned Pregnancy.”

Re Terms of Reference: (4) .....information to support a variety of reproductive choices including to give birth! This is almost an after thought whereas it should be high on the list of choices concerning an “unplanned” pregnancy.

Maintain full statistics of Abortions to offer an indication as to what policies should be undertaken for unplanned pregnancies.

The possibilities are –

- (1) Keeping the child being mindful of the fact that humanity is conferred in the fusion of the ovum and the sperm; (The basic Right to Life is conferred on humanity) The child in the womb is a person. This is science.
- (2) Adoption. Adoption lists in all Australian States and Territories are all a serious possibility.

The possibility of keeping the child is assisted financially, by State and Federal Government and most Employers by offering Maternity Leave and Child allowances. Accommodation is offered; Emergency Accommodation in the ACT is offered. (Government and Karinya House) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Health Centre has a budget of \$12m which is surely assisting in prenatal health for Mothers and babies who attend.

It is disappointing to see an Inquiry to point to one and only one possibility for an "unplanned pregnancy". There are other possible avenues to investigate.

No mention is made of the well-known fact of after effects of abortion on so many women. This is a huge topic your committee not mentioned in your terms of reference. Much has been written on the fact that abortion sometimes increases women's risk of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Further, there is the possibility of future child-bearing after abortion.

Members of our Council would appreciate an opportunity to appear before the Committee at the Hearings. Thank you.

Data [released in a Question on Notice last year](#) revealed there had been 35 terminations after 22 weeks' gestation in the first six months of 2019. During the same period, there were 19 live births, when a fetus survives a termination, 17 of which occurred before 23 weeks' gestation.

Statistics from Queensland:

"In 2013 we saw over 12,000 terminations," she said.

"There were over 11,000 in 2014, 10,800 in 2015, over 10,400 in 2016 and ... 9445 in 2017 and 9308 in 2018."

"What that shows is the passing of this legislation, has not led to an increase in the number of terminations. What it has done is lead to a focus and a willingness for women to come and get proper, safe health."

A Queensland Health spokeswoman said the department did not know the number of terminations performed in 2020.

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