



ABN 99 407 438 693

# Knights

of the Southern Cross (NSW) Inc.

Christianity *and* Service

Founded 1919

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## **INQUIRY INTO HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (MEDICARE FUNDING FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF ABORTION) BILL 2013**

### **SUBMISSION FROM**

### **THE KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS (NSW) INC.**

#### **Summary**

The Knights of the Southern Cross (NSW) Inc. (*see Appendix*) is strongly opposed to abortion and the Medicare funding thereof, for both religious and secular reasons.

The Order supports adoption of the Draft Bill to stop Medicare funding being made available for sex-selective abortion, so as to substantially discourage the procedure.

#### **When human life begins**

The life of a human being starts at the moment of conception. From that moment, the unborn child qualifies as a human person, and has the same inalienable right to life as a human person. This accords with universal moral law.

The inalienable rights of the person must be recognised and respected by civil society and the parliamentary authority.

#### **Abortion**

Abortion is the induced termination of a pregnancy. Abortion, willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law.

Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human foetus and is directed toward its safeguarding or healing as an individual.

It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence.

## **Australian abortion law**

Abortion is the subject of criminal law in all Australian States and Territories, except the ACT. Abortion is legal in the ACT up to full term if it is provided by a medical doctor.

Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have legislation in place that provides a statutory explanation of when an abortion is not unlawful.

In NSW and Queensland, lawful abortion is available under common law interpretations of the Crimes Act or Criminal Code. An abortion is legal when the doctor believes a woman's physical and/or mental health is in serious danger.

## **Disconnection between law and morality**

Civil and criminal law relating to abortion operate independently of morality.

Under abortion law the unborn child has no legal status until the moment of birth, and consequently is denied any rights. The law effectively does not regard the unborn child as a human being.

Abortion law ignores the fact that the fate of an actual human person is involved.

The disconnection between law and morality derives from the legal case *Roe v Wade* decided 40 years ago in the USA, where it is estimated that there have been over 54 million abortions since then (<http://www.conservapedia.com/Abortion>). The enormity of this loss of life may be gauged against the Holocaust, which claimed about six million lives. The case was decided essentially on social grounds, and has been used by pro-abortionists internationally as a precedent for getting abortion laws implemented in their respective countries.

Arguments typically advanced in support of the law that discriminates against the unborn child, include the 'right to choice', the 'right to one's body', and the 'right to privacy'.

Abortion is available virtually on demand. The abortion criteria, e.g. having to satisfy the doctor that a woman's physical and/or mental health is in serious danger, are not an effective deterrent, particularly when the doctor involved is an abortionist and has a conflicting interest. The estimated annual number of abortions carried out in Australia of about 100,000, compares with 300,000 live births. This means that one in four pregnancies ends in abortion, a major cause for concern.

## **Sex-selective abortion**

Sex-selective abortion has been happening in other countries besides Australia.

It is used extensively in China and India to abort female fetuses. This has resulted in significant disparities in male/female population ratios in those countries.

Canadian Margaret Somerville reported in October 2012: "Recent studies have shown that the practice of aborting females in favour of males is happening in Canada, ... (and polls show that) 92% of Canadians believe sex-selective pregnancy termination should be illegal. ... Gender selection has been strongly condemned by all political parties. ... As well, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada have vehemently opposed sex-selection pregnancy termination." ([http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/will\\_choice\\_trump\\_even\\_gendercide](http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/will_choice_trump_even_gendercide))

Sex-selective abortion discriminates against girls and women. It is the expression of a lack of respect for women in cultures in which sons are highly valued and daughters are substantially devalued.

It is used also for family balancing.

### **Medicare funding of abortions**

Abortion law and regulation is a matter for State governments.

Australian government Medicare funding is available and widely used for the procedure, despite the fact that abortion remains in the Criminal Code or Crimes Act in several States.

Easy access to abortion together with Medicare funding are considered to be the major reasons for the large number of abortions in Australia.

The draft Bill proposes that sex-selective abortion be made no longer eligible for Medicare funding. Stopping the Medicare funding would be expected to be effective in substantially deterring access to that type of abortion.

## **APPENDIX**

### **About the Knights of the Southern Cross**

The Knights of the Southern Cross is an association of Catholic men who enjoy the confidence of the Australian Catholic Bishops. It was formed in 1919 at a time of significant social and economic discrimination against Catholics in NSW and elsewhere throughout Australia. Our Members played a significant role in ridding the Nation of this sort of discrimination.

The Objects of the Knights of the Southern Cross are:

1. To promote the Advancement of Australia;
2. To foster the Christian way of life throughout the Nation;
3. To promote the welfare of Members and their families;
4. To encourage spiritual, social and intellectual activities amongst its Members; and
5. To conduct and support educational, charitable, religious and social welfare work.

The Knights of the Southern Cross is committed to its 90 years plus role of the Advancement of Australia and fostering the Christian way of life throughout the Nation.