

SUBMISSION FROM MARYSE USHER, PREGNANCY CRISIS COUNSELLOR AND POST ABORTION CRISIS COUNSELLOR

I would like to offer a short submission regarding the Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2005.

I am a trained, voluntary pregnancy counsellor who does not refer women for abortion on the grounds that abortion brutally, painfully and cruelly kills a defenceless human being and this event, which is carried out within the mother's body, has a permanent, profoundly negative effect on her. Abortion is never justifiable, morally, medically or socially because killing an innocent human being to facilitate another person's temporary relief in a difficult situation benefits no one.

It is my experience of six years of consistent, frequent dealing with pregnant women, that every pregnant woman undergoes a crisis of varying stress and intensity. She may often feel upset about being pregnant and unhappy at the changes this will bring about in her life. She is in no state to make a decision which may "remove the pregnancy" certainly, but which will leave her with a deeply altered personality, diminished enjoyment of life and even an incapacity to carry on. I have deal with hundreds of such women suffering post-abortion syndrome up to 40 years after the loss of their child.

The committee needs to force itself to ask a philosophical and moral question: "If abortion was considered a crime and an act which brought a doctor who performed one into terrible disrepute, and this view was consistent and had nothing to do with any religious, but was rather an ethical standard for 1500 years, what has happened to make this act of destruction a "benefit to women's health", a "right" and an alleged component of "reproductive health". The act of destroying a human being in the early stage of his or her life has always been and will always be, wrong, barbaric, tragic and evil.

Ideological voices which use meaningless phrases to disguise the nature of abortion and who call evil good and who try and deny the terrible effects on women of abortion – which thanks to the internet, any fool can access – should have no currency with federal or state government departments whose first duty is to protect and enhance the life of its citizens, not to destroy and main them, which is what our state and federal governments are doing by using taxpayers' monies to pay a handful of doctors to kill unborn babies.

Women who are determined to abort and who have made up their minds to do so are not interested in counselling and will always find a way to abort. The vast majority of women who call independent pregnancy crisis counsellors are upset, frightened and usually unsupported or under pressure from the baby's father (to facilitate his abnegation of responsibility) to have an abortion. They need to talk to someone, to discuss their options and to be encouraged to continue their pregnancies and to seriously consider relinquishment for adoption when their circumstances dictate hardship to mother and child by sole parenthood.

It is unknown for our service in 20 years to have ever received a call from a mother blaming us for encouraging her to continue her pregnancy and who is unhappy for having given birth to her child. Sadly, we have received thousands of calls from women desperately unhappy, even psychologically disabled after having abortions they were assured by clinic staff would not affect them at all and which they were told carried no physical risks.

The data is out for all to see about the effects of abortion: breast cancer, damaged cervix (leading to subsequent severely premature births), pelvic inflammatory diseases resulting in sterility, uterine lesions preventing implantation, increased risks of ectopic pregnancies and miscarriages, not to mention a dismal plethora of negative emotional and mental sequelae. The cost to the community of post abortion trauma manifesting in physical and psychiatric illness, divorce, drug abuse, abuse of subsequent children, far outweighs the small support given to, say, a single mother, whose every cent goes back into the economy.

It is time for the medical profession and the government to wake up and admit they have made a terrible mistake in facilitating abortion. This terrible situation could be mitigated by the removal of "sex ed" in primary schools; replaced by abstinence programs in senior schools and by wide publicity regarding the dangers and failure rates of the contraceptive pills and of abortion. At the very least, the Government must not pay for abortion through Medicare.

Maryse Usher