



Convener: Rev D.J. Palmer
Secretary: Rev AG Parle

PO Box 4215
Black Rock North Victoria 3193
☎ (03) 9583 2785
email: djpalmer@pcvic.org.au

6th January 2006

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria to oppose the approval of the Private Member's Bill called the Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486) Bill 2005.

We understand the Bill is being proposed to enable the drug RU486 to become freely or more available for abortion, particularly in relation to rural women wanting to abort their unborn, but "developing in the womb", child.

We understand that there are well documented safety and health concerns in relation to this particular drug which others will no doubt write to the Committee about.

Our concern is more in relation to the ethical issues.

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria as an orthodox Christian Church affirms traditional Christian belief that all life comes from God, and is therefore a gift from the moment of conception. We therefore affirm that abortion is wrong. The fact that currently in Australia, between 25% and 30% of all pregnancies in Australia end in an abortion is a national disgrace, and a major contributor to the national birth rate being well below the required replacement level.

The Bill proposes to remove authorisation of the use of the drug from the Health Minister to the Therapeutic Goods Administration which is a body concerned only with issues of safety and efficacy of proposed drugs. The Therapeutic Goods Administration is not required to give consideration to the ethical issues. Rather than enhancing health or life, making RU486 available for securing abortions, will only perpetuate and may well increase the incidence of abortion, ie the taking of a human life, and as we now understand from recently reported studies, increase the risk of mental health problems for women aborting their children.

Should this Bill be approved, it will be one more indication that as Australians who love their country, we are now living under a culture of death, rather than one of life. Christians are for life, not death, and we think Parliament should do all it can to prevent the pendulum swinging even further toward the culture of death

Yours sincerely

Rev David Palmer
For the Presbyterian Church of Victoria