

ATHEIST FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

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Submission to the Inquiry into Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486) Bill 2005

1 January 06

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

Dear Community Affairs Committee,

RU486 is a documented safe and effective abortifacient and is available in many countries. Its only potential is to be an addition to the already safe legal system of abortion in Australia. It will offer an extra choice to women, especially in remote locations.

The present situation of a Health Minister who is openly opposed to abortion on religious grounds and thereby allowing for bias to influence decisions on RU486 is democratically unacceptable. Because of religious opposition to abortion, members of this committee should honestly declare any religious or other 'feelings' on abortion before unduly influencing their fellows.

The Community Affairs Committee has a duty to recognise the untenable situation of reliance on a particular Health Minister to adjudicate on matters medical, when it is common knowledge any decision is highly likely to be influenced by personal moral perceptions.

The use of RU486 is a medical procedure. Its efficacy or not is a scientific matter and therefore must be evaluated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration service and its expert advisers.

Abortion in Australia is legal and it is not within the mandate of the Community Affairs Committee to arbitrate on this point.

The Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc urges that Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486 be repealed.

Yours Sincerely,

David Nicholls
President
Atheist Foundation of Australia