

Catholic Women's League Australia

New South Wales {Inc}.

DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

ABN 84 724 899 679

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10 January 2006

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
Email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

re: **The bill on RU486 {Abortion Pill}**,
We strongly request that no changes are made to this bill, which has been referred to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, and that the amendment remain in place

This submission is made on behalf of the Catholic Women's League Australia, NSW Inc., Armidale Diocese because of the importance most Catholic women would put on reducing the availability of abortion, and particularly one which has so many {so called} deficiencies. Doctors warn that the abortion drug Mifepristone, known as RU486, causes deformities in babies who survive it and carries a risk of toxic shock to women.

It is really important that people know that its not just lethal to unborn children but causes terrible birth defects, such as fused limbs, absent genitals and other birth defects, if the woman decides to go ahead with the pregnancy, says Dr Catherine Lennon, president of NSW Doctors for Life. It is our understanding that The Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 gives responsibility for regulatory approval of RU486 to the Minister for Health and Ageing rather than the Therapeutic Goods Administration and that a new private members bill seeks to repeal that clause and pave the way to allowing its importation and prescription. We ask that thoughtful consideration be given to some of the concerns of our women:

- It is felt that supporters of the drug have been quite deceptive in the promoting the ease of the process.
- The safety and psychological impact on women using it.
- The torturous process requiring three visits to the doctor, and in up to 10 per cent of cases women haven't aborted have to go through the process of surgical abortion anyway.
- Such a high failure rate would not be accepted for something like an antibiotic not working.
- The government should be looking at ways to decrease abortion, rather than introducing another form of it.
- It is also understood that there are serious potential side effects such as excessive bleeding and incomplete miscarriage, as well as there have been several deaths associated with the use of this drug.
- It is believed that some supporters of abortion are also expressing concerns about the drug and that a Dr Renta Klein {who describes herself as prochoice} has written to the Government asking them not to lift the ban – commenting that the mind boggles that such an unsafe, lengthy and totally unpredictable procedure - bleeding, pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, uncertainty as to whether the embryo-foetus has been fully removed – can be seen as easy, natural and left in women's hands.

Australia's Catholic bishops have called on the Government to continue the ban and on both government and community to help provide women with real choices other than abortion. Multiplying the methods of abortion will only multiply the grief – they said. We staunchly join with this view and ask that this very dangerous bill not be passed.

Maureen Armatage – **Diocesan President – CWLA NSW Inc. – Armidale Diocese**

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