

Media release – 1 August, 2018

LEGALISATION WOULD INCREASE ABORTIONS IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS

The claim by Health Minister Stephen Miles at parliamentary estimates hearings yesterday that legalising abortion was unlikely to increase the number of terminations in Queensland's public hospitals is misleading, according to Cherish Life Queensland.

"This is because the assurance by Dr Miles was limited to 'in the short term'," Ms Teeshan Johnson, Cherish Life executive director said.

"The truth is that decriminalisation would corrupt the culture of the Queensland public hospital system over time.

"At the Queensland Parliament Health Committee [hearings into the first Pyne abortion Bill in 2016](#), former director of maternal and foetal medicine at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Dr Carol Portmann, who indicated she performs abortions up to 20 weeks as part of her private gynaecology practice, gave evidence that in the event of decriminalisation, the proportion of terminations done in public hospitals would be likely to increase within a decade from the current 2% to '20 to 25%'.

"Dr Portmann also said that decriminalisation would change the 'health culture' within public hospitals to a culture in which abortion was just 'part of routine medical care'.

Ms Johnson also said that the lack of a true conscientious objection clause for medical professionals in the Labor Government's Bill, if enacted, no doubt would cause some medical professionals to exit the profession, as well as deter new entrants.

"Because the new law would compel doctors to be complicit by referring for abortion, even if they considered it not to be in the best interests of their patients, we could face a health crisis with an undersupply of doctors," she said.

"In decriminalising abortion at all costs, the Queensland Labor Government could irreparably damage our public hospitals and regional health services.

"It is obvious that the number of terminations in public hospitals would increase significantly over time, as one of the reasons advocates give for decriminalisation is to reduce the out-of-pocket costs to women and to make abortion 'free'.

"If abortion on demand is legalised, taxpayer-funded public hospitals will have to offer this elective 'health care' procedure free, for social reasons such as economic disadvantage, relationship break-up or even sex selection.

"Inevitably, the overall number of abortions would increase as a result of this free service, and due to the fact that whenever something is legalised, the incidence of it always rises, as the law plays a role in educating the community regarding moral values."

Teeshan Johnson

Executive Director, Cherish Life Queensland

Email director@cherishlife.org.au

Alan Baker

Vice-President, Cherish Life Queensland

Email baker_ja@bigpond.net.au