

Submission by Email to: [fpa.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fpa.sen@aph.gov.au)

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration Legislation

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

**Submission to: Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees**

**Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion)  
Bill 2013**

**Public Opinion – Opposed to sex-selection abortion (incl. Medicare funding of same).**

There is evidence from several sources, that the vast majority of the community is strongly opposed to sex-selection abortion, including those with strong pro-abortion views.

For example Research carried out by the Southern Cross Bioethics Institute by the Adelaide Sexton Marketing Group showed that respondents who were “strongly pro-abortion “ 82% believed sex selection abortion should not be legal and 85% of that group believed sex-selection abortion is morally unacceptable. (see Seeking an Australian Consensus on abortion and Sex Education, COMMON GROUND?, Editors John Fleming PhD and Nicholas Tonti-Filippini PhD, St Pauls Publications 2007 –<http://www.stpauls.com.au>). On the other hand 91% of those who were “Somewhat pro-abortion” and 99% of those who were “Somewhat anti-abortion” or “Strongly anti-abortion” opposed sex-selection abortions being legal. Similarly this group held strongly that sex-selection abortion is morally unacceptable.

In summary this research is a strong indication that sex-selection abortions are unacceptable to most Australians. Accordingly, if sex –selection abortions are not legally, or morally acceptable to most Australians, then Medicare funding would also be unlikely to be acceptable to the majority.

Further research- by Dr Rebecca Kippen – see

<http://newsroom.melbourne.edu/news/n-436> and a Galaxy Poll of 300

Tasmanians – see <http://www.examiner.com.au/story/1368072/we-dont-want-more-abortions/> show similar strong opposition to sex-selection abortion.

### **Evidence of sex-selection abortion and adverse effects**

The incidences of Medicare funded sex-selection abortions in Australia are not known as no records are kept.

However, there is evidence from doctors that sex-selection abortions are occurring – a case of sex selection abortion has been referred by a doctor to the Medical board of Australia. Also there has been a news report of at least one Australian proposed sex-selection abortion for the purpose of “family balancing” with a Victorian couple aborting twin boys followed by a request for IVF sex-selection to produce a daughter. This case is presently before VCAT. –see <http://www.politicsdaily.com/2011/01/08/couple-aborts-twin-boys-because-they-want-a-girl-using-ivf/>.

Sex-selection abortion leads to serious gender imbalance and has been condemned by the UN as “gender discrimination against girls and women and a violation of their human rights” see [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789241501460\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789241501460_eng.pdf)

Growing migration from countries where sex-selection abortion is common, particularly India and China, indicates a likely increase in demand for sex-selection abortion in Australia and excluding Medicare funding of the procedure will be a practical and publically supported deterrent.

### **Conclusion**

My submission therefore requests that the Committee reflect public opinion in relation to sex-selection abortion, recommending continuing opposition to legalization of the procedure, backing this resolve with a statement recommending Medicare funding be excluded from the procedure.

Peter Murray