



### **Submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee (the Senate Committee) concerning the Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013.**

The New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties (CCL) is committed to protecting and promoting civil liberties and human rights in Australia. CCL is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

CCL was established in 1963 and is one of Australia's leading human rights and civil liberties organisations. Our aim is to secure the equal rights of everyone in Australia and oppose any abuse or excessive power by the State against its people.

To this end CCL attempts to influence public debate and government policy on a range of human rights issues. We try to secure amendments to laws, or changes in policy, where civil liberties and human rights are not fully respected. We also listen to individual complaints and, through volunteer efforts, attempt to help members of the public with civil liberties problems. We prepare submissions to government, conduct court cases defending infringements of civil liberties, engage regularly in public debates, produce publications, and conduct many other activities.

CCL thanks the Senate Committee for the opportunity to contribute this submission.

This bill has been discussed by both by the Police Powers and Civil Rights Subcommittee and the full CCL Committee. We would be happy to discuss the bill directly with the Senate Committee, if that Committee so wishes.

Despite the breadth of the terms of reference given to the Senate Committee, the purpose of this bill is to restrict abortions by denying access to medical insurance for some of them.

1. CCL rejects this way of going about legislation as a matter of principle. If a member of parliament wishes to attempt ban abortions for certain purposes, then a bill proposing to do so should be introduced and debated.
2. Were the bill, or one banning abortions for such purposes, to succeed, those wishing to have an abortion for sex selection purposes would only need to hide their principal purpose and adopt another.
3. Decisions about the funding of legal medical procedures should be made on medical grounds, not on the basis of the particular constellation of motives a person undergoing it might have.

We recommend that the bill should not proceed.

Martin Bibby

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New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties.

