

SUBMISSION TO SENATE INQUIRY INTO BANNING MEDICARE FUNDING FOR SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTION

We are opposed to abortion and to Medicare funding of abortions, for the reasons given below. We support passing the Bill to ban Medicare funding to sex-selective abortions.

1. The life of a human being starts at the point of conception. From that moment, the unborn child has the same inalienable right to life as a human person.
2. Abortion is the induced termination of a pregnancy. It is contrary to moral law.
3. Abortion is legal in all Australian states and territories. It is legal in the ACT up to full term if it is provided by a medical doctor. In NSW and Queensland, under common law interpretations of the Crimes Act or Criminal Code, it is legal when the doctor believes a woman's physical and/or mental health is in serious danger. Elsewhere, it is subject to statutory explanation.
4. Women intending to have an abortion are faced with little or no resistance. Counselling, if any, regarding the health and mental risks of abortion and the options available, is not rigorous, and even can be provided by the abortionist, who has a conflict of interest.
5. Under abortion law the unborn child has no legal status until the moment of birth.
6. Sex-selective abortion discriminates against girls and women. It is the expression of a lack of respect for women in cultures in which sons are highly valued and daughters are substantially devalued.
7. Sex-selective abortion is used extensively in China and India to abort female fetuses. This has resulted in significant disparities in male/female population ratios in those countries.
8. Sex-selective abortion is used also for family balancing.
9. Sex-selective abortion is being carried out in Australia.
10. State and territory governments are responsible for abortion law and regulation.
11. Australian government Medicare funding is available and widely used for the procedure, despite the fact that abortion remains in the Criminal Code or Crimes Act in several states. Such funding cannot be justified or supported on moral grounds.
12. The very large number of abortions in Australia, about 100,000 per year, is attributable to easy access to abortion and Medicare funding for the procedure.
13. The draft Bill proposes that Medicare funding be banned for sex-selective abortion. Denying access to Medicare funding would be expected to substantially reduce demand for that type of abortion.