

**2 AUGUST 2019**

**Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019**

We have provided a statement to the parishioners in our Diocese following the announcement that the *Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 (Bill)* was tabled in NSW Parliament.

If passed, it will make abortion legal up until birth in NSW, for any reason (if the baby is more than 22 weeks in gestation, the consent of two doctors will be required).

There has been no community consultation on this Bill. Attempts to rush the Bill through Parliament intentionally exclude the voices of all concerned citizens, including people of faith, from the debate.

It is important that parishioners are informed of this Bill and can provide feedback to their local NSW State Members of Parliament.

We stand together with Archbishop Anthony Fisher and church leaders from across NSW in asking NSW State Members of Parliament to vote against the Bill. The reasons for this include:

- It would allow abortion up until birth with the approval of two doctors, for any reason.
- It does nothing to provide alternatives for women who feel distressed at being pregnant and feel they have 'no other option.'
- It provides no protection for women experiencing violence (According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 48 per cent of women who report violence from a former partner were abused during pregnancy, as are 18 per cent of women who report violence from a current partner.)
- It overrides conscience of doctors and other medical professionals or institutions, requiring them to disclose their objection and refer to another doctor or institution who will perform the abortion.
- It will leave unborn children and distressed pregnant women even more at risk.
- There has been no community consultation on the Bill.
- Voters have been denied the opportunity to have their voices heard in this debate.

Catholics believe that when considering a matter as significant as abortion, it is not only the mother whose rights and legitimate concerns must be taken into account, but also the unborn child within her whose human dignity and inalienable human rights also need to be considered. Both women and babies deserve better than abortion.

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