

Reproductive Rights Health Youth Bill 2008

Explanatory Notes

Short title of the Youth Bill

The short title of the Youth Bill is the *Reproductive Rights Health Youth Bill 2008*.

Objectives of the Youth Bill

The objective of the Youth Bill is to decriminalise the practice of abortion in Queensland and to establish an institute to provide health care for, and education on, sexual health.

It is in our interests as human beings to have a choice in the most important issues of our lives. This Youth Bill recognises that termination of pregnancies is an issue concerning women's health, both mental and physical. Legislation covering termination of pregnancy should not be contained in the Criminal Code or Crimes Act, and so sections 224 and 225 of the Queensland Criminal Code should be removed.

The establishment of the Reproductive Health Institute (RHI) will ensure that women who choose to undergo these procedures are monitored and are cared for to the highest standard our health system can offer.

The Reproductive Health Institute will be a board set up independent of the government to oversee pregnancy termination procedures in Queensland. The RHI will comprise doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers. The RHI will examine all pregnancy termination procedures available in Queensland and analyse the effectiveness of each procedure.

The RHI is also responsible for presenting to the Health Minister and Attorney-General a summary of all matters relating to pregnancy terminations in Queensland. The professions represented in the RHI will ensure that the pregnancy termination procedure is kept safe and monitored. The RHI will ensure that all women undergoing the procedure

have safe facilities available and programs to help with before and after procedural health care.

The aim of the Youth Bill is not just to legalise pregnancy termination, it gives women a choice and most importantly, it is designed to educate.

The Reproductive Health Institute's Educational Program (RHIEP) is a system of education, particularly in high schools and family planning centres, with the aim of decreasing the number of unwanted pregnancies.

A variety of topics that will be covered in RHIEP's educational program such as—sexuality and personal safety, support networks, dealing with sexual assault and rape, safe sex and reproductive rights and responsibilities. Education is the key to solving and preventing any problem, and will play a vital role in this Youth Bill to ensure its effectiveness.

The general objectives of this Youth Bill are to ensure the well being and mental stability of women facing an unwanted pregnancy. The ability for women to have this choice will ensure that women have safe options, rather than back alleys, illegal criminal acts. Women's reproductive health is a matter of well-being and should not be seen as a crime. With the extensive careful planning of this Youth Bill, and with its support and education programs and a medical board to oversee its operation, this is a better option than criminalising innocent women who have found themselves in the very difficult situation of an unplanned pregnancy.