

Pro-life Health Professionals Australia
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14th March 2025

To Hon Christopher Minns MP
Premier of New South Wales
Labor Party of New South Wales
Email: Chris.Minns@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Cc: premier@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Subject: Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 conscientious objection amendment

Dear Premier Minns,

On behalf of Pro-Life Health Professionals Australia (PHPA), we write to express our deep concern regarding the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, in particular the proposed amendment against conscientious objections and the need for practitioners to refer for an abortion, even if it violates their code of ethics.

The overwhelming majority of health practitioners have a conscientious objection to abortion at some level. Mandating practitioners to refer for an abortion significantly undermines the fabric of quality health care. Health care professionals must be supported to provide high quality individualised health care solutions, based on their expertise and desire to save lives, without the risk of experiencing moral distress from a requirement to go against their conscience¹. **There are other means of educating women on their pregnancy options without legally coercing practitioners to explicitly refer for an abortion.**

The **NSW Legislative Council inquiry into birth trauma**² generated considerable interest worldwide, when mothers of babies with Down Syndrome expressed feeling pressure to terminate their pregnancies. The current legal requirement for health practitioners to provide information on abortion, but not on alternatives to abortion, directly undermines the quality of counselling to women regarding the options available to them, increasing this risk of feeling coercion to terminate. This amendment will only further exacerbate this risk.

Since the Bill was first tabled, a **campaign on Conscientious Objection for Health Professionals has gathered over 3000 signatures** and continues to grow: [PHPA Conscientious Objection Campaign](#).

We also include in attachments, a **letter signed by 50 NSW members of our organisation, who wish to personally acknowledge their strong objections to this amendment.**

There are several other sound arguments as to why the other aspects within the Bill are also concerning to health professionals and residents of NSW, but we focus on conscientious objection as a critical issue.

¹ Salmasy, D. P. 2008. "What is Conscience and Why is Respect for it so Important?" Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics. 29(3): 135-149.

² New South Wales. Parliament. [Legislative Council. Select Committee on Birth Trauma](#). Report no. 1, May 2024

PHPA

Pro-life Health Professionals Australia

Pro-life Health Professionals Australia represents a broad coalition of health care professionals dedicated to advocating for health care that defends the lives of both mothers and their in-utero infants. Many of our members (including obstetricians, general practitioners, midwives, nurses, pharmacists and allied health) have first-hand experience with the devastating realities of the liberal abortion laws around our country, particularly concerning late-term abortions and the ethical conflicts they create for practitioners who do not wish to be involved in deliberately ending the lives of viable fetuses.

The **NSW Health Report**³ on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, dated September 2024, received 2 December 2024 and tabled 11 February 2025, **states on page 5, that no legislative amendment is required** for the 2nd recommendation regarding practitioners who conscientiously object. This Bill amendment contravenes that directive.

Given the critical maternity workforce shortage in regional NSW, it is incomprehensible that the NSW Parliament would consider *any* measure that risks driving health care providers out of the profession. Women in regional NSW deserve for all their health care providers to be supported by their government to continue their critical work. This amendment will achieve the exact opposite, and deserves to be voted down for that reason alone.

We call on members of the NSW Parliament to **protect freedom of conscience for health practitioners** or face considerable ramifications that are detrimental to NSW health professionals, and the health of pregnant women especially in regional NSW.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Melissa Lai
Neonatologist
Director of PHPA



Dr Simon McCaffrey
Obstetrician and Gynaecologist
Deputy Director of PHPA

And the PHPA Executive Team

³ NSW Health, 2024, [Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, Reg. no. 2754](#)