



Media Release: Victorian late term abortion figures

The 2009 Annual Report of the Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity was released last month and details the growing numbers of late term abortions being undertaken in Victoria.

From a total of 410 post 20 week abortions, 214 were performed on physically healthy babies, with 10 of these undertaken after 28 weeks, a time when these babies could have been safely delivered alive and the psychosocial concerns of their mothers addressed.

Over a ten year period from 1999 – 2009 late term abortions in Victoria grew from 66 to 410, with more than half of these being undertaken for psychosocial reasons in every year since 2004 (2007 being an exception). The 2009 figures show an even more disturbing increase, that is the number of very late term abortions on healthy, viable babies for maternal psychosocial reasons.

Most of the general public continue to believe that late term abortions are only undertaken when women are seriously ill and their lives are threatened, or when their babies have no hope of survival and will die a more horrific death if allowed to come to term. Neither of these is true.

Most remain ignorant of the reality that women continue to be offered surgical solutions to their economic, social, relational, and mental health problems rather than positive solutions to address their circumstances, even when they are at a stage of pregnancy when their babies could be safely delivered alive.

The international research clearly demonstrates that up to 30% of women suffer serious and prolonged mental health problems after abortion with women having later term abortions being at higher risk than those having abortions at early gestations.

Research further indicates that the majority of women undergoing abortion do so feeling as if they have no other choice, forced to choose between their unborn and their jobs, or their education, or their partners or family support. This is not choice for women. This is coercion wrapped up in a tidy 'safe and common surgical' package that denies women the right to genuine and supported options.

Real Choices Australia rejects the idea that abortion is ever in a woman's best interests or that surgical or medical solutions to women's social, economic, or relational problems in the absence of genuine, supported alternatives can ever be considered a free choice.

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