



“I can definitely see that I was choosing to take on a lot of responsibility and feeling like I had to, almost in a sense, control everything that happened. And having a child is not about that at all. It’s about trusting that that is what is right and letting go of that control and letting it flower and bloom.”

HIROKO

the Choice

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“There were nights where I’d just cry in amazement and then, half an hour later, I was crying because I couldn’t find a way where I thought I could keep the child and everything would be great.”

NATALIE



Don Parham - Director

The Choice (Don Parham, 2006) is a film about the experience, not the politics, of abortion. It gets behind the often hysterical and over-politicised debate to the real human stories, allowing women and men to talk freely about their own personal experience of abortion. The film is built around six core stories with people of diverse age and background. Five women and one man share their most intimate thoughts about what it was like to be suddenly confronted with an unwanted pregnancy. Their stories reveal the varied and complex circumstances in which people struggle to work through their options and make, what for most, is a difficult choice.

The Filmmaker

The Choice was written, directed and produced by Don Parham for SBS television. Parham has made several documentary films exploring relationships between men and women. These include *Deadly Hurt*, about domestic violence and the gender war

(1994), *We’re All Independent Now*, about marriage and divorce (1995), *Love’s Tragedies*, about adultery (1999) and *Why Men Pay For It*, about men, sex and prostitution (2003).

In his Director’s statement Parham explains how he sees this film as fitting into his body of work.

It is useful to see The Choice, in some ways, as another film in which I explore the subject of relationships between men and women. In this sense, a film about abortion fits neatly into my body of work. It is yet another angle on the same core subject that has underpinned five of my eleven films to date.

I think it’s important to see The Choice in this context because some may ask ‘why is a man making a film on a woman’s issue?’ I don’t see abortion as just a woman’s issue for the very obvious reason of the role the man plays in conception. More importantly, it becomes very clear very quickly when you talk to women and men about their personal experience of abortion that relationship issues are usually a central part of the story.

Curriculum Relevance

This film will be of interest and relevance to middle and senior secondary students, as well as tertiary students, in the following curriculum areas:

- Health and Human development
- Religion and Society
- Values Education
- Legal Studies
- Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE/HSIE)
- English
- Media Studies
- Nursing
- Medicine
- Social Work

Note to Teachers

At the end of this guide there is some detailed statistical information about abortion in Australia. It may be best to read through this after students have watched *The Choice*. In a very real sense, this film speaks for itself and

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while the issue of abortion is highly contested, the film should be both the starting and finishing point of discussions.

Glossary

Abortion – deliberate induction of a miscarriage.

First-trimester abortion – abortion performed during the first three months of a pregnancy. Abortion is generally performed using suction aspiration.

Mid-trimester abortion – abortion performed when a woman is more than three months pregnant.

RU 486 – trade name for an abortion-inducing drug developed in France. When taken during the first five weeks of pregnancy it blocks the action of progesterone so that the uterus sloughs off the embryo. While its use was approved in Australia in early 2006, it is not yet widely available.

Pro-choice – an umbrella term for groups and individuals who advocate a woman's right to control her own body, especially her right to an induced abortion.

Pro-life – an umbrella term for groups and individuals who advocate alternative options to abortion for women. These groups, including the Right to Life, also advocate full legal protection of embryos and fetuses.

Student Activity I Before watching the film

Depending on the age and composition of the group these questions may best be approached through class discussion, rather than on an individual level. Students could be encouraged to investigate some of these questions e.g. 5,

6 and 7, through web references listed at the end of this guide.

1. When faced with a difficult life choice, what process do you go through to arrive at a decision?
2. How easy, or difficult, is it to anticipate the personal consequences of important choices you have made in your life?
3. Describe how you view the issue of abortion.
4. What role do you think men should play in the decision to abort a child?
5. Approximately what percentage of women in Australia has an abortion to terminate a pregnancy each year?
6. Is abortion legal in Australia today? Are the laws the same in all states?
7. In which decade of the twentieth century did the contraceptive pill become widely available in Australia?
8. Who should take responsibility for contraception within a relationship?
9. Describe any situations where you believe abortion should be readily available to people.
10. Why do you think the issue of abortion divides people so dramatically as both a religious and a political issue?
11. Do you believe abortion should be seen as a religious or political or even human rights issue?

People in the film

The film is built around six individuals of diverse age and background.

1. Natalie is 30-years-old and works in Human Relations
2. Firak is 40-years-old and runs a restaurant.
3. Pauline is 61-years-old and a nurse
4. Ruth is 29-years-old and currently works as a receptionist
5. Catarina is 45-years-old and a librarian
6. Hiroko is 27-years-old and works as a trainer in the hospitality industry



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Ways to watch the documentary

This film is spare, direct and respectful to both the issue and the individuals in the way it is constructed. We see and hear the stories of each of the six people without the intrusive presence of an interviewer. Students could be divided into small groups initially, with each group asked to focus on *one of the six individuals*. Another group could be asked to focus their attention *on the style of the film* and the use of cityscapes and music as an integral part of the film. The sets of questions below should be given to the students to read through before they watch the film.

Student Activity 2

Individuals and their stories

Natalie

1. How does Natalie describe the relationship she was in when she was in her early twenties?
2. What were some of the issues Natalie felt would have made it difficult for her to have a child at this time in her life?
3. How did Natalie's partner respond to the news of her pregnancy?
4. What did Natalie hope his response might be?
5. Did her partner's response make her decision more difficult?
6. After having the abortion, Natalie moves interstate and starts a new job. Does this help her to 'put the abortion behind her'?
7. What does Natalie believe would have been helpful to her at the time she became pregnant and had to decide whether to abort the baby?

Firak

1. How does Firak describe himself as a young man?
2. What were some of the reasons Firak gives for being unprepared to father a child at this time in his life?
3. How did his parent's experience influence his decision?
4. How many abortions did Firak's girlfriend have?
5. When the relationship broke up, how does Firak see the abortions as playing a part in this?
6. How many children does Firak now have?
7. How would he advise his own children if they were faced with an unplanned pregnancy?

Pauline

1. How old was Pauline when she first became pregnant?
2. What were her feelings for Ron?
3. How does she explain how the decision to have this abortion was part of a pattern in her behaviour and approach to life?
4. Pauline was a young woman in the 1960s. How different was this

period for women who wanted to control their fertility to the way things are today?

5. After marrying Ron at twenty-one, Pauline had three children in four years. Why did she not want a fourth child at this time?
6. Describe the difficulties she had with contraception.
7. What is Ron's response to her suggestion that he have a vasectomy?
8. How does Pauline now reflect on the two abortions she had as a young woman? Explain how she views the decisions she made at this time today.

Ruth

1. How does Ruth describe her attitude to life as a teenager?
2. How did the shock of an unwanted pregnancy cause Ruth to re-examine her view of herself as a woman, especially in relation to her upbringing and her parents' values?



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3. What was the major factor in Ruth's decision to abort the child?
4. When she has a second abortion after becoming pregnant in another relationship, how does she explain her feelings in relation to her earlier abortion?
5. In what ways have the experiences of the abortions continued to haunt Ruth?
6. What does she do as part of an attempt to deal with her feelings of loss and sadness?
7. How does writing the letter to, and naming, her aborted babies help Ruth to deal with her sense of guilt and loss?

Catarina

1. What are Catarina's strongest memories of her childhood with hardworking migrant parents in the 1960s?
2. When she became pregnant at twenty-three to her long-term boyfriend, why did she decide not to go ahead with the pregnancy?
3. How does Catarina connect the high expectations she has of herself with her decision to have an abortion?
4. Why is she so clear that becoming a single mother was not the right thing for her to do at this time?
5. Explain how you think she now considers her decision not to have a child when she was in her twenties?
6. Now in her forties, statistically how likely is it that Catarina will have a child?
7. When Catarina says, 'it's hard sometimes', what do you think she means?



Hiroko

1. How did Hiroko's early experiences of family life affect her behaviour as a teenager?
2. In choosing to work as a 'hostess' in Sydney bars, what does she say she was looking for?
3. How old was Hiroko when she had her first abortion? What were the main factors behind this decision?
4. At twenty-three Hiroko again becomes pregnant. What are the aspects of this relationship that lead her to decide not to have the child?
5. Four years later how does she view her earlier decisions about not having a child?
6. How does she explain her attitudes towards having a child in the future?

Style of the documentary

Don Parham, the filmmaker, has made a documentary that adopts a minimalist style in the way he presents these peoples' stories. Consider why he made the film in this way, in relation to the subject matter.

1. The backgrounds against which the people are filmed are simple dark unadorned curtains. How does this focus our attention on what is being said and how?
2. Imagine the individuals had been filmed within their home or work environments. How would this have changed the way we see each individual?
3. Intercut with the interviews are visual sequences of cityscapes. What sort of contrast and/or background do they provide for the interviews?
4. What is the effect on the viewer of the images of cityscapes as they move through the day from morning to evening on an essentially grey wintry day?
5. Describe some of the images of both people and places we see in these cityscapes. How do they reflect some of the themes of the interviews?
6. Describe the music used in the film and how it relates to

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the stories and images. What words would you choose to best express the mood created through the music?

7. Parham chose to use captions to identify people in the film rather than the more intrusive voice-over technique we often hear in documentaries. Equally, we do not hear the voice of the interviewer. How does this emphasis on quietness create a particular 'tone' in the film? Describe this tone.

8. Don Parham, Director of 'The Choice', says this about the relationship between form and content in the film



Hiroko and Director, Don Parham

"The style or form chosen for this film, probably more so than in any other film I've made, grew out of the content. We got the content first, that is, we filmed and did a cut of the interviews first and then we sat down and contemplated what sort of imagery would best complement this material. So, the idea of the cityscapes followed on from, and was driven by, the themes that emerged in the interviews.

One of the biggest themes to emerge was the struggle or conflict many of our characters talk about between the tug of what we might call the 'inner' - the new life they feel inside them when falling pregnant, and the contrary tug of the 'outer' - the expectations, ambitions and plans they have for their lives. This emerged as probably the core drama for our characters. It seemed that giving in to the inner life meant loss of control of the outer life.

The decision to film the 'cityscapes' rather than 'observational' or more typical 'cut away' footage of the

subjects was meant to reflect these themes. By interweaving the interviews and the cityscapes we set up a kind of dialogue between the two - the interviews reflect the inner world and the cityscapes reflect the outer world. This dialogue is probably more 'felt' than 'thought' by the viewer."

What did you think of the director choosing more metaphorical than literal visual sequences to intercut with the interviews?

Do you think the cityscapes are an appropriate reflection of what is being said by people in the interviews?

Do you think you would have preferred to see more footage of the characters in their own environments. If so, why?

"I blocked everything out. It was - 'this is my body, my decision, my life and I'm not going to ruin it'."

CATARINA

Student Activity 3 Putting it all together

Now that you have watched the film and considered the 6 individual stories and the way the film is made, this activity asks you to look at the elements these stories have in common by sharing your observations. While the film does not make any judgements about the rights or wrongs of these individuals' choices, there are certain common elements in their stories. Read the statements in the left hand column and fill in the names of the individuals to whom they best apply. The first one has been done for you.

Chart 1

Statements	Individuals to whom they best apply
A stable relationship is important in any decision to have a child.	Natalie, Ruth, Catarina, Hiroko
Our own experiences of family life strongly influence our decisions to have children.	
Financial security is important in deciding to have a child.	
The decision to have an abortion has ongoing consequences in peoples' lives.	
There is a lingering sadness in peoples' lives following an abortion.	
Men and women are equally affected by the decision to abort a child.	
A wish to be in control of their lives underpins decisions to proceed or not with an unplanned pregnancy.	
Talking about the experience of abortion is often seen as a taboo subject.	
Deciding to abort a child is not necessarily a negative experience in a relationship.	

Student Activity 4 Taking it Further

Abortion as a personal and emotional issue as well as a contested religious, legal and political issue.

1. The film's title is 'THE CHOICE'.

The abortion issue revolves around the notion of "choice". Supporters of abortion describe themselves as being "pro-choice", that is, being in favour of a woman's right to "choose" what she does with her own body. Opponents of abortion, on the other hand, argue that women often feel pressured into having an abortion because of the "lack of choice" or other options available for them.

(i) Discuss what you think about the notion of "choice" in the abortion issue (ii) What do you think is meant by the term "informed choice"? (iii) What are the alternatives to having an abortion?

2. A section on a Government website providing information about what is involved in an abortion has this to say under the heading 'Emotional Impact'.

*Studies show that most women who have an abortion don't suffer any subsequent psychological or emotional problems. Women who do experience guilt, depression and grief tend to be those who were coerced into the operation by partners or family.*¹

How do the experiences of the individuals in this film support or contradict this assertion?

3. South Australia has a program of mandatory counselling for women who are considering abortion. Since then they've seen a twenty-five per cent drop in the women who actually then go and have an abortion. It's not because it's been outlawed but it's because better options have been made available. More information is available to women.²

Do you think that if a counselling program such as this one had been available to the people in the film, it may have assisted them in making different choices about how to proceed?

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4. A number of religious groups and individuals oppose abortion on any grounds, believing it to be the killing of an unborn child. This document provides an overview of the views of major religious groups about abortion. It can be accessed as a PDF document at <http://www.nswrtl.org.au/alm/16bookLR.pdf>

A 2005 ABC radio discussion about this document can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/reirpt/stories/s1334113.htm>

Compile a list of the main arguments many religious groups cite in their opposition to abortion.

5. Abortion and the law.

The following is a summary of abortion law by state taken from a Right To Life document *Abortion in Australia*.

Summary of Abortion Law by State

Abortion is effectively available on demand in every state up to 20 weeks gestation, and in some states even later. Abortion law differs from state to state.

In New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania it is a criminal offence to unlawfully supply or administer any poison or other noxious thing, or to use or supply any instrument with the intent to procure a miscarriage.

In New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, how an unlawful abortion is defined is determined by case law and each case must be decided on its merits. Without investigation and enforcement of

the law, abortion is generally treated as a normal procedure and without extra scrutiny, first and second trimester abortion procedures are funded via Medicare.

The South Australian, Western Australian, Northern Territory and Tasmanian legislation sets out provisions for a lawful or 'legally justified' abortion.

(For further information see: http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/181_04_160804/dec10242_fm.html

where you can read an article from the Medical Journal of Australia discussing this issue).

For an alternative viewpoint on the legal issues go to -

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2560>

6 Abortion in the Parliament.

The abortion issue is raised periodically in Federal Parliament. In 2006 debate centered on the introduction of RU486, the so-called abortion drug, which has now been approved for use in Australia. Given the wide variation in State and Territory laws, and the strong passions felt by many people about this issue, debate is likely to continue.

- The current Federal Health Minister, Tony Abbott, has publicly expressed his opposition to abortion.

- Some Members of Parliament have suggested they would like to see an end to Medicare funding for abortions and have also called for better statistics to be compiled on abortion in Australia.
- Other MPs are concerned about the number of late-term abortions. (While statistics are not readily available it is thought that only about five per cent of abortions occur after fourteen weeks.)
- The Government has said that if there were to be some Federal action against abortion, it would require a private member's bill to pass on a conscience vote. This means all members would be free to vote according to their own views rather than on party lines.

Some commentators have said that politicians in general, and male politicians in particular, shouldn't stir up unnecessary debate about abortion. On the other hand, some commentators thought the recent parliamentary debate about RU-486 (which allowed for a conscience vote) was a refreshingly candid and mature debate.

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By using the information provided in this guide, your own research and your responses to the documentary, conduct a class forum on whether you think it is appropriate or not for politicians to enter the abortion debate and whether the issue of abortion should be a matter for debate in Federal and/or State Parliaments. If you believe it should, suggest how the debate should proceed and the questions it should address.

7 'Abortion grief is a taboo subject'. Write your thoughts about this statement and account for why this might be the case in society.

8 Has watching this film and discussing the issue of abortion modified any views you may have held and responded to in Student Activity 1? Explain how you now think about abortion.

STATISTICS ON ABORTION IN AUSTRALIA

(Sourced from: 'The Abortion Issue' Vol. 213, *Issues in Society*. Editor: Justin Healey, The Spinney Press, 2005)

http://www.spinneypress.com.au/213_book_desc.html

- Our current ratio of one abortion in every four pregnancies is an improvement over the estimated one in three recorded in Australia in the 1930s.
- International research shows that women will still seek abortion, even if the procedure is illegal. Numerous studies have shown that the majority of Australians support the idea of safe and legal abortions. However, Australian abortion laws are typically vague and open to interpretation.
- Around one in three Australian women will undergo an abortion.
- Unwanted pregnancy can affect any woman of childbearing age, but studies show that some women are at greater risk than others. The typical profile of a woman seeking abortion includes: aged in her twenties; single; well educated; childless; and employed
- Studies show that between half and two thirds of all women presenting for abortion were using contraception at the time.
- Studies show that most women who have an abortion don't suffer any subsequent psychological or emotional problems. Women who do experience guilt, depression and grief tend to be those who were coerced into the operation by partners or family.
- Around 80,000 Australian women have the operation every year.
- Estimates vary, but complications can occur in around three per cent of abortions.
- Emergency contraception can involve either having an intra-uterine device (IUD) inserted as soon as possible after the event, or taking emergency hormonal contraception (sometimes referred to as 'the morning-after pill').
- The chance of getting pregnant from a single act of unprotected intercourse varies from four to twenty per cent. Using emergency contraception can further reduce this risk so that the chance of pregnancy can be reduced to around two to five per cent.
- Only five per cent of children are now born to women aged nineteen years and under. Estimates vary, but it is believed that around one in four sexually active teenage young women become pregnant by mistake. About half of these unwanted pregnancies are terminated.
- One in six women aged twenty to twenty-nine, who are asked about pregnancy, will have experienced a pregnancy as a teenager.
- Unplanned pregnancy options include:
 - Abortion: sixteen per cent of Australian women seeking abortion are teenagers.
 - Adoption: relatively few women relinquish their children for adoption anymore, although adoption agencies and

the demand for babies still exist.

- Foster care: the child lives with a foster family until the teenage mother feels ready to cope as the primary carer.
- Parenting: the stigma of single parenthood has passed, which means that keeping the child is more common than in the past.
- In nearly one quarter of cases, the partner is never told about the pregnancy. Most teenage women believe that having a child would have a positive effect on their relationship; however, of those women who choose to keep their baby, twice as many live in hostels than with the father of their child.
- The reported average national abortion rate in 1997-1999 (based on Medicare claims, which are believed to be an underestimate) was twenty-two abortions per 1000 teenagers per year, compared with nineteen live births. This indicates a higher teenage pregnancy rate than many other developed countries, and one of the highest teenage abortion rates in the developed world.
- There are 100,000 abortions in Australia each year. There are 250,000 live births each year in Australia, which means that there are two aborted babies for every five born.
- Worldwide, there are about 60-70 million abortions being carried out.

- The average age of an aborted foetus is 8 weeks.
 - Ninety-eight per cent of abortions are for convenience (these reasons do not include medical purposes, rape or foetal deformities).
 - A report which analysed changes in the attitudes of more than 20,000 people to abortion since 1984 found little had changed:
 - Almost ninety per cent believed it was acceptable for a woman to have an abortion if there was a strong chance the baby would have a defect, while almost all believed it should be allowed if the mother's health was in danger.
 - Sixty-five per cent endorsed abortion for low-income families who could not afford more children.
 - A married woman having an abortion because she did not want more children or one who was unmarried and did not wish to marry the father earned approval from about sixty per cent of respondents.
 - Twenty-one per cent thought abortion should be allowed if the child was likely to be aggressive or violent, and twenty-four per cent were undecided.
- In 1984 a large majority favoured abortion for catastrophic reasons and a small majority for contraception. By 2002, this had barely changed.>

GIVE WOMEN CHOICE: AUSTRALIA SPEAKS ON ABORTION

Southern Cross Bioethics Institute 1E/336 Marion Road North Plympton SA 5037 Australia

Tel: +61 8 8297 0022 Fax: +61 8 8297 5738 Email: scbi@bioethics.org.au Website www.bioethics.org.au

Executive Summary

The first stage of a major in-depth investigation of Australians' attitudes to abortion was conducted in December 2004.

The key findings from this research are:

Majority support for abortion on demand significantly softer than anticipated.

When asked if they supported abortion on demand, 62% said yes. This in principle support softens when particular circumstances are considered. Nearly half the population (45%) are 'moderate' in their attitude to abortion in that they somewhat agree or somewhat disagree or

are neutral in their attitude to abortion on demand. Put another way, 63% of Australians either oppose or are not strongly supportive of abortion on demand.

Strong community support for a reduction in abortion numbers without restricting access.

64% to 73% of Australians think that the abortion rate is too high. 87% believe that it would be a good thing if the number were reduced while at the same time protecting existing legal rights to freely choose abortion.

Very strong support for the necessity of legal abortion.

7 out of 10 Australians agree with arguments for legal

access to abortion based upon women's rights and the idea that abortion is 'a necessary evil,' while 75% agree with the argument that it gives women control over their own lives. However, 58% do not accept the 'foetus is not a person' argument.

Australians deeply conflicted on morality of abortion

Although supportive of legal access to abortion, Australians are deeply ambivalent about the morality of abortion. Apart from 'hard cases' involving a danger to the mother's health or foetal disability, fewer than 1 in 4 thinks abortion is morally justified.

Overwhelming support for abortion for foetal disability.

Support for legal abortion is strongest in the cases of severe foetal disability (85%) or mild foetal disability (60%). But only 15% believe abortion is morally acceptable when the foetus is healthy and there is no abnormal risk to the mother.

Experience of parenthood affects support for abortion.

Adults who have had children are significantly less supportive of abortion on demand (58%), compared to those who do not have children (74%).

Near unanimous support for serious consideration of all the alternatives before choosing abortion.

While 75% of Australians believe access to abortion gives women control over their lives, 94% think all the alternatives should be seriously considered before exercising this option.

Strong community support for women who choose alternatives to abortion.

While 61% to 74% of Australians feel positively towards women who choose alternatives to abortion, only 28% are positive towards women who choose to have an abortion.

Significant considerations for a woman are health and personal circumstances.

The community believes that significant considerations informing a woman's choice to have or not to have an abortion are:

- The woman's health (96%);

- The consequences for the unborn child (80%);
- The woman's personal circumstances (78%);
- Moral considerations (71%); and
- Religious considerations (53%).

Near unanimous support for counselling prior to abortion.

99% of the community believe that women contemplating an abortion should have access to counselling. Of these:

- 78% believed women should have counselling; and
- 21% believed access to counselling should be voluntary.

Among those who are strongly pro-abortion:

- 72% said counselling should be provided; and
- 27% said it should be voluntary.

Near unanimous support for information on abortion health risks.

98% of the public think that women should be advised of any health risks involved in having an abortion before choosing an abortion.

Low level of awareness of alternative services to abortion.

Most of the community believes that a woman contemplating abortion should seek advice from more than one source, such as a health professional independent of the abortion provider, a relative or friend, or a professional counselling service. But most (58%) indicate that they themselves would not know where to refer a woman for alternative support services during or after a pregnancy.

Overwhelming support for a continuing and inclusive debate.

Only 22% of Australians think they are very well informed on the topic of abortion. Despite recent moves to 'shut down' public discussion of abortion, most (71%) support greater public discussion and most (76%) believe men have an equal right to public comment.

While on the surface there may appear to be considerable public support for legal access to abortion, underneath there is substantial unease about the abortion rate and some of the circumstances in which women avail themselves of this option. Australians favour both genuine choice and lowering the number of abortions. Taken together this suggests that there is a very large

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constituency for social policy initiatives which enhance choice without restricting access. In the present context, however, the public's strong desire for a reduction in the number of abortions is accompanied by a clear preference for this to be achieved by non-coercive means. The case for providing a greater range of alternatives to abortion, and promoting those options much more widely, is strongly supported by the research data.

Australians are not persuaded that the present situation guarantees real choice. Most think women need more information, and more independent sources of information, about the implications, risks and alternatives to abortion. Women should be assisted to consider serious a range of choices, including carrying through with the pregnancy to term and bringing up the child themselves (with appropriate community support), or placing the child for adoption. Making such choices real and viable will also entail embedding the issue of abortion in wider issues such as taxation and income policy, family assistance, social security, demographic issues, family-friendly work arrangements, and improved access to child care.

The present research data suggest strong public support for counselling before deciding to have an abortion. Consent to abortion requires more than a simple 'yes': the Australian public also expects that it be an informed choice, after serious considerations of:

- The risks and alternatives;
- The consequences both for the woman and the unborn child; and
- The moral issues involved.

Were government and other major institutions to enable and encourage genuine choice for pregnant women, they would not only help to reduce the abortion rate but also satisfy the public that the abortion decision is not being forced upon any woman through lack of information and viable alternatives. Even the strongest supporters of abortion on demand want it to be a last rather than a first resort, and social policy should be recalibrated to ensure this.



References

Books

Melinda Tankard Reist, *Giving Sorrow Words*, Duffy and Snellgrove, 2000.

Reist is a Canberra based writer whose book, telling many women's stories of abortion, was an acknowledged inspiration for Parham.

Films

Vera Drake, (2004, Mike Leigh) tells the story of a woman caught up in the world of dangerous backyard illegal abortions in 1950s England.

My Foetus, (2004, Julia Black) A British documentary film, showing 3-D ultrasound images of the foetus in the womb at 9, 12, 18 and 23 weeks. Black was pregnant during the filming and gives birth at the end of the film. The film is neither pro nor anti abortion, but provoked heated debate when it was shown in Britain and Australia.

Websites

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

State Government site from the Department of Human Services providing an overview of commonly asked questions about abortion.

(Accessed 11/10/06)

<http://www.nswrtl.org.au/alm/16bookLR.pdf>

The views of major religious groups about abortion.

(Accessed 12/10/06)

http://www.democrats.org.au/speeches/index.htm?speech_id=1937&display=1

Transcript of a speech by Senator Lyn Allison of the Democrats outlining what she sees as some of the dangers of religious views becoming a major part in any political debate about abortion and the use of the so-called abortion pill – RU486.

(Accessed 12/10/06)

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/author.asp?id=2012>

This site contains many articles by pro-life advocate Melinda Tankard Reist. http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/T/thinktv/comments/0404_myfoetus.html

An online discussion forum about the documentary film *My Foetus*, following its broadcast in Britain in 2004.

(Accessed 13/10/06)

<http://www.abc.net.au/compass/support.htm>

This site lists contact details for a number of organizations offering assistance to people in times of personal crisis.

(Accessed 13/10/06)

(Endnotes)

1 http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/BHCV2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Abortion_in_Australia?

OpenDocument

2 Tracey Gordon, spokesperson for the inter-faith Religious Leaders Forum, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/relrpt/stories/s1334113.htm>



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