

# Queensland Health

## Key facts about the Termination of Pregnancy Act

Prior to 3 December 2018, it was unlawful to administer a drug or to perform a surgical or other medical procedure intending to terminate a pregnancy except in limited circumstances.

The *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018* (the Act) applies to termination of pregnancy in Queensland. The purpose of the Act is to enable reasonable and safe access by women to terminations of pregnancy and to regulate the conduct of a registered health practitioner in relation to terminations.

The *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018* is effective from 3 December 2018.

### Fast facts about termination of pregnancy

Half of Australian women will experience an unplanned pregnancy in their lifetime.

Between 10,000 and 14,000 terminations are performed in Queensland each year.

Most terminations are performed in the first trimester (up to 12 weeks) in the private sector.

While termination of pregnancy is one of the most common procedures performed for women, it can be inaccessible, expensive and heavily stigmatised.

By positioning termination of pregnancy as a health issue rather than a legal issue, the Act:



supports a woman's right to health including reproductive health and autonomy



provides clarity and safety for health practitioners providing terminations of pregnancy



brings Queensland legislation in line with other Australian jurisdictions.



**Queensland  
Government**

## Queensland termination of pregnancy law

The Act provides the legislative framework for the circumstances in which a termination of pregnancy is lawfully provided. Key provisions of the Act are:

- Registered medical practitioners may perform a lawful termination of pregnancy on request up to a gestational limit of 22 weeks.
- For a woman who is more than 22 weeks pregnant, a termination may be performed by a medical practitioner if they consider that, in all the circumstances, the termination should be performed and they have consulted with another medical practitioner who also considers that, in all the circumstances, the termination should be performed.
- A medical practitioner, nurse, midwife, pharmacist or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner may assist in a termination within their scope of practice.
- A woman may consent to, assist in, or perform a termination (e.g. by taking prescribed medication).
- It is an offence for an unqualified person to perform or assist in a termination.
- A health practitioner may refuse to perform or assist in terminations of pregnancy because it conflicts with their own personal beliefs, values or moral concerns. This constitutes a 'conscientious objection'.

- Where a health practitioner conscientiously objects to a termination, they must disclose their objection and refer the woman on to a health practitioner or service who they believe can provide the requested service and does not hold a conscientious objection.
- Safe access zones are established around premises that provide terminations of pregnancy to protect the safety and wellbeing and respect the privacy and dignity of women, staff and others who need to access the premises.
- It is an offence to engage in prohibited conduct inside a safe access zone.

### For more information visit

- [Queensland Health website](#)

