

25<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Mr Bob Brown  
GPO Box 404  
Hobart  
TAS 7001

Good morning Mr Brown,

I appreciate your taking the time to read this letter.

I write to you regarding the circumcision of my son, Connor.

I attach an as yet unanswered letter to Kristina Keneally. This letter has, since writing, been quite widely distributed. If I may direct you to that in order to avoid repetition here.

I understand that infant male circumcision is now almost wiped out in Tasmania. Unsurprisingly then, the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute is showing a pathway that the rest of Australia will hopefully one day follow. Warwick Marshall's paper is here: <http://www.law.utas.edu.au/reform/documents/CircumcisionIssuesPaperA4toPrint.pdf>

My questions to you, Mr Brown, and on the assumption that you may be of a mind to assist on this issue, are these:

1. May I ask, firstly, if you are in any way a proponent of infant circumcision?
2. The Australian Human Rights Commission appears to have unlimited power in terms of mandate and laws to address the obvious discrimination being conducted against infant males in Australia by State governments and medical regulatory authorities. (See the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1984). The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which Australia is a signatory) has a SPECIFIC clause regarding guaranteeing 'physical integrity'. **I would remind you that female genital circumcision is explicitly banned in all States and Territories and is, in NSW at least, a reportable offence.** Through that prism, are you able to enlighten me as to why my requests to the AHRC regarding this issue have thus far been totally dismissive and/or intellectually inane?
3. The Commonwealth government, via Medicare, pays a scheduled rebate for infant male circumcision. Obviously, no rebate is payable for the act of female circumcision. Far from being absolved of involvement in this matter by simply deferring to the States as the controlling bodies, the act of paying a Medicare rebate for the 'procedure' is tantamount to an endorsement. Do you agree with this analysis?

4. At present, the States are able to shy away from direct responsibility on the basis that the delivery of medical services and many of the attendant controls are delegated to the various regulatory bodies such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Royal Australian College of Physicians. It appears that in doing so they feel absolved from legislative responsibility. Do you consider this to be an acceptable way to handle a most basic human rights issue such as the circumcision of an infant that is incapable of giving consent? Or do you feel, like me, that the community via it's elected leaders should be morally responsible for making such decisions?

5. The latest directive on the subject from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners can be found here:  
<http://www.racp.edu.au/page/policy-and-advocacy/paediatrics-and-child-health>

Once again, as with their last doctrine on the subject, they state that there is "no medical reason for routine infant circumcision".

Why is there not some effort being made to disseminate this information? Other areas, arguably far less important, are offered government resources to educate the public about all manner of apparent misconceptions.

Myths and blatant mistruths about circumcision are allowed to be propagated by, shall we say, 'special interest groups', while infants continue to be subjected to permanent, irreversible, debilitating and painful surgery for no good reason.

Could you please comment on why the act of male circumcision is allowed by government to remain fogged by mythology, ritual and untruth.

6. Although the number differs from region to region, the Australia wide circumcision rate is now somewhere between 15 and 19%. That infers that approximately 80% of the Australian population regard circumcision as lying somewhere along a continuum bounded by 'unnecessary' and 'barbaric'. Would you please indicate the Australian Greens attitude towards infant male circumcision.

Notwithstanding the specific questions above, I would welcome any other comments or assistance you may feel you are in a position to offer.

Yours sincerely,