

## **Justine Armstrong – A Victorian Division One Theatre Nurse Wanting to Renew Her Registration**

I am a happily married mother of two beautiful children and a skilled theatre nurse with over 15 years nursing experience. Prior to the birth of my second child I worked in a Victorian public hospital operating theatre. After spending the last 4 years in full time parenting I recently planned to renew my registration to return to work but have since placed the process on hold awaiting the outcome of this Bill.

If passed, this Bill would force me to directly participate in abortions as a theatre nurse. This is totally unacceptable to me and my family. It is immoral. It violates my personal and professional ethical framework. It is an affront to my faith and it strips me of my fundamental rights as a human being and as a professional, to object to an action that contravenes my personal conscience.

In a letter to the ANF (Australian Nursing Federation) an advisor to the Health Minister states that, "*Nurses employed in operating theatres in hospital will not have a direct relationship with the woman in question therefore the conscientious objection clause will not apply*". To say that theatre nurses have no direct relationship with the woman demonstrates a serious lack of understanding of the role of a theatre nurse. I quote from the Victorian Perioperative Nurse's Group's definition that, "*the perioperative nurse clinician is responsible for both direct and indirect patient care during surgical intervention within the operating suite.*"

I am not a robot, I care for my patients in a holistic manner in regards to their emotional, physical and spiritual needs.

The future of my nursing career is under threat from this proposed Abortion Bill. As a nurse my duty of care is to **save lives**, not to end life.

The other reason that I hold an objection to abortion is due to the surgical nature of the procedure that procures an abortion. I do not have to highlight to you the brutal nature of this surgery – you can look it up on the internet to find out more about this.

Two years ago, I personally suffered the grief and trauma of losing my third baby through miscarriage requiring surgical intervention. I will not relive my trauma again and again in assisting in the intentional death of the unborn that is similar to the surgery I underwent post my miscarriage. This is a fundamental reason for my conscientious objection to assisting in an abortion. I have a right to function in a workplace that safeguards my emotional health.

Therefore the future of my nursing career is in the hands of Victorian Parliamentarians this week.

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