

Dear Editor

It's very important to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in Australia, but that won't be achieved by believing Tony Abbott's misguided generalisations about the reasons women decide to terminate pregnancies ("Why so many abortions?" January 8). Mr Abbott may claim 'some women choosing abortion have their lives under control and are not disadvantaged by income or age'. Raw stats about the amount of money in a relationship and the age of women and their partners tell nothing about the problems in that woman's life or her partnership. Mr Abbott assumes these women have their lives 'under control' yet a high rate of women abused by partners end up in abortion clinics.

The one in three Australian women who will terminate a pregnancy are women are from all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Countries such as Belgium and Holland whose abortion rate is much lower than ours have a nationally coordinated sexual and reproductive health strategy. If the Federal government is serious about reducing terminations, it must work with states to improve access to contraception and increase education for young men and women about respectful relationships, fertility and their bodies. A national sexual and reproductive health strategy is vital to reducing unwanted pregnancies. The Federal Health minister's personal views are not.

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