



**Senator Sue Boyce**  
**Senator for Queensland**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**October 3, 2012**

**FORCED STERILISATION INQUIRY**

The Senate Community Affairs Committee is to inquire into the involuntary and coerced sterilisation of people with disabilities in Australia.

Queensland LNP Senator and committee member, Sue Boyce, said: “The inquiry grows out of concerns that people are being sterilised without informed consent and in circumstances where the convenience of others may be superseding the rights of the disabled.

“There is anecdotal evidence that sterilisation is being used, in some cases, for menstrual management.

“While the Family Court and State and Territory tribunals are obliged to use a ‘best interest test’ when approving the sterilisation of women with impaired decision-making capacity, there is no mechanism to guide the values underlying these decisions. Is it the best interest of the individual or the parent or the carer or the institution where they live and so on?

“Australia does not even have a clear picture of how many procedures are occurring each year, nor in what circumstances,” Senator Sue said.

“I especially welcome this inquiry as a way to get a clear picture of current decision-making and current practices and to ensure they are brought into accord with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

“The organisation, Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA), has advocated nationally and internationally for changes to the law that genuinely recognise the rights and the safety concerns of women with a disability and I support their campaign.

(<http://www.wwda.org.au/confpaps2011.htm>)

“The Inquiry will also look at the impact of sterilisation on people with disabilities who have had the procedure and the resources available for supporting and educating people with a disability and their families about all aspects of reproductive health.” Senator Boyce said.

Information about the inquiry and how to make a submission can be found by going to:  
[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate\\_Committees?url=clac\\_ctte/forced\\_sterilisation/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=clac_ctte/forced_sterilisation/index.htm)

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