

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**EVIDENCE AND EQUITY SHOULD SHAPE ABORTION AID POLICY**

The Public Health Association of Australia has welcomed the Government's decision to review a ban on Australian aid being spent on abortion advice in developing nations.

“The policy in relation to the expenditure of aid dollars should be based on evidence, rather than any moral or religious judgement on the part of politicians. Research findings suggest that the current guidelines preventing AusAid from disseminating information about abortion are contributing to the death of women in many countries. If this is true, the Government is certainly doing the right thing in reviewing the current policy,” explained Michael Moore, the Association's Chief Executive Officer.

“It has been claimed that the current guidelines are encouraging unsafe illegal abortions, which are responsible for 13% of all maternal deaths internationally. The Australian Government has a responsibility to examine the issue and overturn the policy when evidence indicates that it is contributing to bad health outcomes for women.

“There is also an equity issue involved here, as the services we are discussing are available to Australian women. Are we saying that women in other countries don't deserve the same advice in order to be able to make informed choices about matters that affect their health and safety?

“The Public Health Association has a long standing policy that *'abortion services should be made affordable, available, safe, accessible and equitable'*. This position is supported by the evidence and is just as relevant in developing countries as in the Australian context.

“We are pleased that the Australian Government will review the current policy and encourage them to do so with the principles of evidence and equity in mind,” said Mr Moore.

**For further information/comment:**

Michael Moore, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia

0417 249 731