



**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
WOMEN'S HEALTH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**
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**PHAA WOMEN'S HEALTH GROUP AND VICTORIAN BRANCH WELCOME
BILL TO DECRIMINALISE ABORTION
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The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) Women's Health Special Interest Group and Victorian branch congratulates The Hon Candy Broad MP and the Association for the Legal Right to Abortion for the introduction today of a Bill to remove termination of pregnancy (abortion) from the Victorian Crimes Act (1958).

PHAA strongly believes that the criminal law is an inappropriate vehicle -- both in principle and practice -- for regulating the provision of abortion. PHAA contends that all reference to abortion should be removed from Victorian criminal law and should be regulated, as are all the other health services, by Victorian healthcare legislation.

Dr Angela Taft, the national co-convenor of the Women's Health Special Interest Group said today

“ With the passing of this Bill in the Victorian Parliament, Victorian legislation will finally reflect current health service practices and the Victorian community's support for safe, legal abortion services.

She added that the potential benefits of decriminalisation include:

- less fear and confusion among health service providers and women
- better planning and quality of sexual and reproductive health services
- improved and more equitable access to termination services earlier in pregnancy
- contributing to improved data collection around termination services

PHAA believes that good public health policy reduces unplanned pregnancy (and consequently abortion rates) through the provision of well-planned comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, which would result in abortion being safe, legal and rare.

For more information please contact Dr Angela Taft on 8341 8571/8500 or 0413 486 213 or Dr Rhonda Small 8341 8542 or 0434 027760

For more information download PHAA's kit :Abortion in Australia: Public Health Perspectives (including information about decriminalisation)

<http://www.phaa.net.au/factsheets.php>