Recognising abortion as basic health care makes good sense

The South Australian Branch of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has welcomed news the SA government will move to decriminalise abortion and make the procedure an essential health care service.

PHAA SA Branch President Kate Kameniar said, “This is good news. The government recognises the current laws, which 50 years ago led the nation, are no longer fit for purpose.”

A Bill to reform South Australia’s abortion laws is due before the state parliament early next year. It will be a conscience vote for members of the Liberal Party under Liberal premier Steve Marshall.

The commitment was made by state Attorney General, Vickie Chapman and Minister for Human Services, Michelle Lensink.

It follows an inquiry by the South Australian Law Reform Institute. The Institute was tasked with looking at potential reform based on best clinical practice and access to procedures in both metropolitan and regional areas.

One in three women in South Australia will have an abortion in their lifetime. Many still have to travel into Adelaide for the procedure without the support of family and friends.

“The current laws are discriminatory and restrict women, particularly regional women, from accessing abortion care,” said Ms Kameniar.

“Abortion should be treated as a health procedure, not as a crime.”

“It should be an accessible public service provided by appropriate health professionals, like all other health care, and require the same standards for regulation.”

“It is critical that when considering new laws, the state parliament does not recreate outdated and existing restrictions on women being able to access abortion care,” added Ms Kameniar.

ENDS

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