

FAIR AGENDA

To the Members of NSW Parliament,

We write to express our concern about the harassment and intimidation of patients seeking abortions at NSW clinics. As experts in our respective fields, we urge you to vote in support of the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2018, which would create 150 metre safe access zones around abortion clinics in NSW.

All people should be able to access the healthcare they need safely, with dignity and in privacy.

Yet patients and healthcare workers across NSW are being harassed and intimidated as they enter reproductive healthcare facilities. There are reports of people being jostled, yelled at, and even filmed outside abortion clinics. This is unacceptable by any modern standard.

Reproductive healthcare decisions are personal medical decisions. Women must be able to access health professionals who are qualified, trained and equipped to provide the support and information they need to make the best decision about their bodies.

No person should have to fear a gauntlet of harassment and intimidation just to see their doctor about a personal medical decision.

Many women who have endured sexual assault rely on reproductive health services for care. Being abused, jostled, or recorded as they walk towards a clinic poses a risk of additional trauma, and could mean that they are unable to access vital healthcare when they need it.

This is about safe and equitable access to reproductive healthcare.

We strongly support the introduction of 150 metre 'safe access zones' around health services that provide abortions in NSW. Similar safe access zones are already successfully operating in Victoria, the ACT, Northern Territory and Tasmania.

We urge you to protect patients' rights to privacy, safety and dignity by voting in favour of this Bill.

Signed,

Fair Agenda
Human Rights Law Centre
NSW Council for Civil Liberties

New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation NSW
Public Health Association Australia
Women's Electoral Lobby
National Foundation for Australian Women
Women's Legal Service NSW
Community Legal Centres NSW
NSW Rape Crisis Centre
Domestic Violence NSW
Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service NSW Inc
NCOSS
No To Violence
Kingsford Legal Centre
Family Planning NSW
Marie Stopes