



New South Wales
Council for Civil Liberties

NSWCCL PUBLIC STATEMENT

in support of

***The Public Health
Amendment (Safe Access to
Reproductive Health Clinics)
Bill 2018***

14th June 2018

NSWCCL urges support for safe access to abortion clinics bill

The Public Health Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2018

NSWCCL has for many years advocated decriminalization of abortion. We are confident that the NSW Parliament will eventually accept women's right to make their own reproductive choices and respond to the strong community support for this right to be reflected in the law.

In the interim, NSWCCL strongly supports the Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics Bill introduced by Penny Sharpe MLC as a greatly needed safety and privacy provision for women lawfully accessing reproductive health clinics in NSW.

The regular- and often extreme- harassment and intimidation of women accessing NSW clinics is indisputable – as is the inadequacy of current NSW law to provide protection from this harassment.

NSWCCL has defended civil liberties for 55 years in NSW. We are very cautious in supporting any law which impinges on free speech or the right to protest. This amendment will impinge on some people's freedoms within the limited safe access zones around reproductive health clinics offering abortion services. However given the objective of the Bill is the protection of women accessing lawful services from serious harassment and intimidation in a limited zone, we consider its provisions to be reasonable and necessary.

We note that the NSW Parliamentary Legislative Review Committee considered this aspect of the Bill and also concluded the restriction on some liberties in this context was reasonable

Similar provisions exist in 2 states and 2 territories.

NSWCCL applauds Labor and Greens support for this Bill. We similarly applaud the support and advocacy of National MLC Trevor Khan in co-sponsoring the Bill with Penny Sharpe.

We urge all Government members in both Houses of Parliament to consider the impact of the current harassment and intimidation on women seeking a lawful medical service and support this necessary, sensible and proportionate Bill.



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