



New South Wales  
Council for Civil Liberties

## **NSWCCL PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### **High Court Decision Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics**

**10<sup>TH</sup> April 2019**

## **NSW Council for Civil Liberties welcomes High Court decision protecting women's safe access to abortion clinics**

Today the High Court of Australia [made a decision](#) which maintains greatly needed legal protections for women seeking reproductive health care - including abortion- in Tasmania and Victoria. NSWCCCL welcomes this unanimous upholding of the current laws in these states.

The provisions which provide these protections within a 150-metre safe access zone, had been challenged by anti - abortion campaigners who argued they infringed their right to free speech and political protest.

In rejecting this line of argument, the High Court found that any impediment to free speech or political protest caused by its prohibition within this limited 150 metre zone was 'negligible'.

This accords with the position NSWCCCL took in supporting the passage of the ***NSW Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics*** legislation in 2018. We took this position as an organisation which has defended civil liberties for over 50 years and approaches any law which limits free speech or political freedom with great caution. We considered the NSW legislation to be necessary and reasonable.

The High Court decision today provides a very welcome level of certainty as to the constitutionality of the NSW safe access zone provisions.

The decision not only provides clarity as to the constitutionality of existing provisions it also provides a context which should facilitate the extension of these much-needed legal protections to women in Western Australia and South Australia.

We extend our thanks to the Human Rights Law Centre and the Melbourne Fertility Control Clinic for their submissions to the High Court in defence of the safe access zones.

Pauline Wright  
**President**  
**NSW Council for Civil Liberties**  
**Mob**

-----  
**Contacts in relation to this statement**

Pauline Wright President NSWCCCL: [pauline.wright@nswccl.org.au](mailto:pauline.wright@nswccl.org.au)

Dr Lesley Lynch VP NSWCCCL: 0416497508; [Lesley.lynch@nswccl.org.au](mailto:Lesley.lynch@nswccl.org.au)