

NSW Abortion decriminalisation campaign launches **2nd May 2019**

The NSW Pro-Choice Alliance today launched its NSW abortion decriminalisation campaign in Sydney as peak legal, health and community organisations signalled a commitment to have abortion removed from the NSW Crimes Act and regulated like any other health procedure.

Led by the Women's Electoral Lobby, the Alliance brings together more than 60 organisations committed to seeing abortion decriminalised in NSW, campaign manager Sinead Canning said.

"We need to take abortion out of the Crimes Act and update these laws that are 119 years old," Ms Canning said.

"NSW residents who access or provide an abortion risk being jailed for up to a decade.

"These laws criminalising women and health workers are wholly out of step with public sentiment, and mean access is most difficult for the most vulnerable women in our society.

"We are the only state or territory in the country that has never updated or modernised its abortion legislation. Now is the time to reform abortion laws in NSW.

"70% of Australians believe that women should be able to access abortions readily¹, and we know that 1 in 4 Australian women will have an abortion in their lifetime².

"Considering these realities, it is past time that NSW follow the examples of states like Queensland and Victoria by introducing sensible, modern regulation of abortion as a healthcare procedure," Ms Canning said.

Family Planning NSW and the Human Rights Law Centre are centrally involved in the campaign, and welcomed the launch.

Family Planning NSW Medical Director Dr Deborah Bateson said abortion must be removed from the NSW Crimes Act so health workers can care for patients without fear of prosecution.

"We know this is a healthcare issue and women deserve access to healthcare," Dr Bateson said.

"Women in NSW deserve to have control of their reproductive choices and certainly shouldn't be criminalised for accessing healthcare. Abortion should be safe, lawful, accessible and affordable."

Adrienne Walters, Senior Lawyer at the Human Rights Law Centre, said that the values of 1900 should not control women's lives in 2019.

“Every day, women in New South Wales are treated as second class citizens when it comes to healthcare by the criminalisation of abortion. The laws defy modern medical practice and are hopelessly out of step with community values and common sense,” said Ms Walters.

“Every single one of us should have the freedom to decide what is right for our bodies and lives. It is time for this to become a reality in New South Wales law.”

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Questions

If you have any questions about the launch, please contact Sinead Canning on 0466 643 467 or at reproductiverights@welns.org.au. Thank you for your continued support!