



22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

### **Safe, legal and affordable terminations are every woman's right**

In May 1998 changes were made to both the Criminal Code and WA Health Act, making terminations in WA lawful (under 20 weeks) when the abortion was performed by a medical practitioner in good faith and with reasonable care and skill, and where a woman had given informed consent.

As a result, WA women are now able to safely obtain an abortion without the threat of prosecution.

It is disappointing that nearly 20 years later, the same cannot be said for women in NSW.

Where safe and legal abortion services are not available, the inevitable use of unsafe services can occur, leading to injury and even death. Women living in rural and remote areas are particularly at risk, with only minimal – and often expensive - services available.

Comprehensive support services, including skilled non-directive counselling about all options, should be freely available and accessible to all women making decisions about unintended pregnancies. Early termination is safer than late termination because of the lower risk of complications, and in the interests of women's health and safety, SHQ supports laws that facilitate early access to appropriately trained services.

SHQ believes that terminations performed by qualified health professionals should be removed from the Criminal Codes/Acts in all states and territories in Australia, with many people unaware provisions for abortions are still listed here.

Every woman has the right to access safe, legal and affordable termination services.

#### **Sexual Health Quarters**

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