

MEDIA RELEASE



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ABORTION DECRIMINALISATION DELAY A SLAP IN THE FACE TO WOMEN & EXPERTS

The NSW Pro-Choice Alliance has slammed reports the Legislative Council will not vote on the *Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019* this week and will instead delay the vote until September.

Chair of the Alliance, Wendy McCarthy AO said the delay was a galling back down moments after receipt of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues report which had recommended the Legislative Council consider the bill.

"This is an absurd situation where the government is ignoring the experts - the doctors, the women's health organisations, the lawyers and the domestic violence experts who have all endorsed this bill. Instead, they are being swayed by a few hysterical voices who have no interest or expertise in caring for women, and do not reflect the majority view of the community," Ms McCarthy said.

"This delay is a perverse and ridiculous waste of time. Nothing will change in the next 3 weeks, but the same group of MPs, the same religious leaders and the same political commentators will continue to present distorted information, disrespect women and make more attempts to further frustrate the process.

"We have been waiting for this bill for 119 years. I have been campaigning to see these laws changed for 50 years. We have waited too long and the women and doctors of NSW should not have to wait any longer," Ms McCarthy said.

Family Planning NSW CEO Adj. Prof Ann Brassil said the delay showed a contempt for women and the health staff who worked with them.

"Over the past few days we have heard from women who have had abortions. They have said this vicious debate has been both distressing and completely disrespectful of their experience," Adj. Prof Brassil said.

"Politicians are dragging out a debate that the rest of Australia and much of the Western World has long since put to bed.

"These groups garnering for extra time and perverse amendments, which seek to block access and build obtrusive restrictions, are openly staunch opponents of abortion.

"There is no scenario in which opponents are ever going to support abortion as healthcare for women. We need the NSW Parliament to put the needs of women and their healthcare ahead of this despicable lobbying."

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