

MEDIA RELEASE



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NSW PRO-CHOICE ALLIANCE CONDEMNS AMENDEMENTS PROPOSED BY CROSS-BENCH MLCs

THE NSW Pro-Choice Alliance - the peak campaign body for abortion decriminalisation in NSW, representing over 70 health, legal and community organisations - has announced its firm opposition to proposed amendments by cross-bench MLCs to the *Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill*.

The Alliance maintains that the amendments proposed will devastate women's access to healthcare, with doctors facing threats of seven years imprisonment in a raft of unworkable amendments designed to limit choice and access to abortion care. The proposed amendments inappropriately intervene in the professional standards of health workers and take the decision to have an abortion away from a woman and her doctor.

Alliance chair Wendy McCarthy AO said: "if these MLCs really cared about women and wanted to centre women in the legislative process regarding abortion decriminalisation, they would have responded to our many requests to meet to discuss the Bill.

"If they wanted to 'put women first', they would listen to the peak women's, health, legal, domestic violence prevention and other frontline services that have urged them to support the Bill.

"Instead, they're engaging in cynical political ploys to frustrate the legislative process. The majority of the amendments they're proposing were already summarily rejected by the NSW Legislative Assembly. Their behaviour is unconscionable.

"The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill as it stands is an appropriate and conservative approach to decriminalising abortion and regulating it as the health procedure it is. We urge all MPs to vote against these proposed amendments," said Ms McCarthy.

Family Planning Medical Director Associate Professor Dr Deborah Bateson said: "doctors and other highly trained health professionals are regulated by best clinical practice and professional guidelines. The proposed amendments will only hinder health professionals in delivering appropriate healthcare services to their patients, and ignore these existing guidelines."

"These amendments are impractical, unnecessary and pose a direct threat of imprisonment on doctors. The real people who pay the price for this are of course women who ultimately find it more difficult to access abortions in a safe, affordable and equitable way," Dr Bateson said.

-ENDS-

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