

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## NSW abortion law reform realised

The NSW Pro-Choice Alliance has welcomed the adoption of the Abortion Reform Bill 2019 which finally ends 119-year-old laws that criminalised women for seeking abortions.

Alliance Chair Wendy McCarthy said the change was a victory for NSW women who were the last in Australia to have abortion laws reformed.

“The new legislation explicitly acknowledges a woman’s right to make choices as an equal alongside her doctor and removes the stigma of criminality from this common healthcare procedure, which around 1 in 4 women have had,” Ms McCarthy said.

“For too long women in NSW sought abortions under the threat of prosecution. Having abortion in the NSW Crimes Act for 119 years has reinforced the idea that women cannot be trusted to make informed, compassionate and intelligent decisions about their health, and this has and made it very difficult for health workers to provide care.”

Family Planning NSW CEO Adj. Prof Ann Brassil said: “This legislation is a chance for new generations to enjoy a freedom to control their own reproductive health and it is fitting given more than 70 per cent of NSW voters support the decriminalisation of abortion.

“The new legislation is also a chance for healthcare providers to reform access and equity issues that have plagued abortion services for decades. The criminalisation of abortion affected the most vulnerable women most harshly as it is those living in rural areas, from minority communities and low socio-economic backgrounds who have been least able to access equitable care.

“It is now time for health providers to move forward with the legislation and improve how we care for NSW women with unintended pregnancies or a devastating fetal diagnosis.”

In May the [NSW Pro-Choice Alliance announced](#) a collective of health, legal, women’s and human rights organisations committed to seeing abortion decriminalised in NSW. The [bill was brought to the NSW Parliament](#) by a cross-party group of MPs in July and by that time the Alliance had grown to represent more than 70 expert organisations. Abortion law reform in NSW follows similar moves in other jurisdictions including Victoria in 2008 and Queensland in 2018.

The NSW Pro-Choice Alliance is led by the Women’s Electoral Lobby and includes leadership support from Family Planning NSW and Women’s Health NSW. The Alliance would also like to acknowledge the collaboration and leadership from the Human Rights Law Centre.

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