



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate distribution

A new era for women's health and equality

MELBOURNE – Monday 2 May 2016

Women's Health Victoria celebrates the commencement of safe access zones in Victoria today. We congratulate the Victorian Government on introducing this important and long awaited reform and thank all the parliamentarians involved in the passing of this legislation.

The legislation creates safe access zones of 150 metres outside services providing surgical and/or medical abortions, and follows similar legislation passed in Tasmania and the ACT in 2015.

'Safe access to reproductive health services, including abortion, is critical for women's health and gender equality,' says Rita Butera, Executive Director of Women's Health Victoria. 'This reform to enable women to access legal health services free of harassment is long overdue,' she continued.

'We wish to recognise the bravery of the women who have been subjected to harassment and intimidation in the past, and the dedication and courage of the staff and health professionals who have put themselves on the line, year after year, to ensure women can safely access the basic health services they need,' Ms Butera says.

Women's Health Victoria is confident that all women will now be able to access reproductive health services with the same degree of dignity, privacy and safety that all Victorians are entitled to expect when accessing a health service. We expect to see this new law protecting women's right to safe access respected by all members of the community.

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact:

Kylie Inserra, Communications Coordinator, Women's Health Victoria

Ph: 03 9664 9316

M: 0409 119 101

Email: kylie.inserra@whv.org.au

About Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) is a not-for-profit, state-wide women's health promotion, information and advocacy service, focused on improving the lives of Victorian women. WHV works collaboratively with women, health professionals, policy makers and community organisations to influence and inform health policy and service delivery for women. The work of WHV is underpinned by a social model of health and a commitment to reducing inequities in health which arise from social, economic and environmental determinants.

For more information, visit www.whv.org.au