



Women's Health Victoria

'knowledge into action'

Balancing rights to improve women's sexual and reproductive health

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Presentation overview

Feminism and human rights frameworks

Abortion law reform in Victoria

Show how a balance of rights can be achieved



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**Balancing rights –
sexual and reproductive rights

and

rights relating to freedom of
conscience, religion and belief.**



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Human Rights Frameworks

CEDAW Article 16(1)(e) Women should be able to –

Decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.



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Australia's Human Rights Framework
was released in April 2010

<http://www.ag.gov.au/humanrightsframework>

It follows consultation and review:

National Human Rights Consultation in December
2008

Human Rights Consultation Committee Report
(HRCCR) published in September 2009.



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Australia's Human Rights Framework has the following components:

Reaffirm

Educate

Engage

Protect

Respect



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Human rights as advocacy tools – using a rights based approach to improve health



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Participation

Accountability

Non-discrimination

Empowerment

Linkages –

*to international human rights
instruments*



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Abortion Law Reform Act (Vic) 2008

- Removed abortion from the Crimes Act
- Outlines access to abortion as a health service
- Specifies requirements of conscientious objectors



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Section 8, Abortion Law Reform Act (Vic) 2008:

- (1) If a woman requests a registered health practitioner to advise on a proposed abortion, or to perform, direct, authorise or supervise an abortion for that woman, and the practitioner has a conscientious objection to abortion, the practitioner must –
- (a) Inform the woman that the practitioner has a conscientious objection to abortion; and
 - (b) Refer the woman to another registered health practitioner in the same regulated health profession who the practitioner knows does not have a conscientious objection to abortion.



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Impact on women when a health professional won't comply with section 8

- Compromises her health
- Violates her ability to make an informed decision
- Causes trauma
- Inefficient, inconsistent and inequitable health services for women



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Human rights and women's health