

Joint statement on the federal election

We call on all political parties and candidates to commit to ensuring ***affordable, accessible abortion care in Australia.***

Abortion is essential healthcare and must be accessible—no matter where you live, who you are, or how much money you have.

Australia's healthcare system is built on the promise of universal access. Yet for many, **abortion remains difficult to access**—due to geography, cost, limited providers, stigma, and discrimination. These barriers disproportionately impact people on low incomes, those in rural and remote communities, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and migrant and refugee communities.

The rise of the anti-rights movement is threatening sexual and reproductive health rights around the world—and Australia is not immune. We are seeing renewed attempts to wind back abortion rights in some states and territories.

Now more than ever, we need bold, unified political leadership at all levels of government to protect abortion rights and strengthen access.

The problem

Abortion is a safe and legal medical procedure in Australia.

Approximately half of all pregnancies are unplanned,¹ and **1 in 4 women will have an abortion in their lifetime.**²

Yet access to abortion across Australia is fragmented and unequal.



Data from 2021 shows 1 in 3 Australian women, and 50% of women in remote areas, had no local GP providing medication abortion.³

11%

Only 11% of GPs in Australia prescribe medication abortion.⁴



Many publicly funded hospitals that provide maternity and women's health services do not provide abortion care, or care is very limited.

67%

In Victoria alone, 67% of local government areas have no surgical abortion providers.⁵

The solution

While recent commitments to improving contraceptive choices are an important step forward, reproductive healthcare is not complete without equitable access to abortion.

All governments must work together to protect and support access to abortion – it is not the sole responsibility of state and territory governments. The Commonwealth Government holds critical levers.

We call on all political parties and candidates to commit to ensuring affordable, accessible abortion care by:

- **demonstrating national leadership** to affirm abortion as essential healthcare
- **ensuring the Medicare Benefits Schedule includes appropriate remuneration for healthcare providers** to deliver affordable care
- **supporting workforce capacity building** by working with medical and professional colleges providing sexual, reproductive and maternal healthcare training
- **ensuring public hospitals provide abortion care** as part of standard, comprehensive reproductive health services
- **working with state and territory governments** to implement all 36 recommendations from the Senate Inquiry into universal access to reproductive healthcare.

¹ <https://www.unfpa.org/press/nearly-half-all-pregnancies-are-unintended-global-crisis-says-new-unfpa-report>

² South Australian Abortion Reporting Committee Annual Report for the Year 2021, 2023, p12
<https://www.childrenbychoice.org.au/organisational-information/papers-reports/abortion-rates-in-australia/>

³ Subasinghe AK, McGeechan K, Moulton JE, Grzeskowiak LE, Mazza D. Early medical abortion services provided in Australian primary care. *Med J Aust.* 2021;215(8):366-70.

⁴ Srinivasan S, James SM, Kwek J, et al. What do Australian primary care clinicians need to provide long-acting reversible contraception and early medical abortion? A content analysis of a virtual community of practice *BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health* Published Online First: 02 July 2024. doi: 10.1136/bmjshr-2024-202330

⁵ Sarder M, Mogharbel C, Kalman T (2024) Realising access: abortion and contraception inequities and enablers in Victoria. *Women's Health Victoria*. Melbourne. <https://www.whv.org.au/training-and-resources/publications-and-submissions/realising-access-abortion-and-contraception-inequities-and-enablers-in-victoria/>

Statement signatories



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THE ABORTION PROJECT

