

**Submission
No 29**

INQUIRY INTO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Organisation: Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre

Date Received: 13 August 2019

The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 should be supported because:

- Abortion remaining in the NSW Crimes Act creates barriers to people accessing reproductive healthcare, as the threat of criminalisation limits doctors and hospitals willingness to refer or provide terminations.
- As a result: it can be prohibitively expensive, especially to women on low and fixed incomes and young women who have no income, to women who live in rural and remote areas and don't have access to services, some women/pregnant people have to travel hundreds of kilometres or interstate to access a termination.
- On Central Coast, there is only one service offering pregnancy terminations and it is often booked up. People then have to travel to Newcastle or Sydney, adding to their burden. This is especially difficult for women who already have children. They then need to organise childcare and or Before/After School Care while wanting to keep their health issue confidential.
- The barriers to access are increased for culturally and linguistically diverse people as services are not available in their language or community on the Central Coast.
- Please remember, one in five women in Australia will have an abortion in their lifetime; we are not talking about an insignificant number of women
- The public supports a person's right to choose, with over 70% of people in NSW supporting the decriminalisation of abortion.
- NSW is the last state to decriminalise and we need it to do so, without raising any more barriers to reproductive health care.