



MEDIA RELEASE

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Safe Access here to stay

MELBOURNE – 10 April 2019

Women's Health Victoria celebrates the High Court's decision to uphold safe access zones laws!

The High Court has ruled that women have the right to reproductive healthcare without being harassed and abused – women's right to privacy, wellbeing and safety is here to stay!

"The High Court's decision affirms the law in Victoria and makes clear that free speech is not a licence to harm others with impunity", says Rita Butera, CEO of Women's Health Victoria.

Safe access zones are about creating safe spaces for women to act on private medical decisions, and safe work places for clinic staff.

Access to essential reproductive health services is critical to women's health and wellbeing, as well as for gender equity. Women in our community deserve the same level of privacy and respect when entering or existing a health services as anyone else.

The decision today upheld the laws in place in Victoria and Tasmania. Ensuring that women and health professionals in Western Australia and South Australia are also free from harassment is the next priority.

'We wish to once again 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,' said Ms Butera.

-ENDS-

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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 whv.org.au**