



MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: Monday, 15 June 2020 - 6am

Empowering women to exercise their reproductive rights: 1800 My Options receives its 10,000th call

MELBOURNE – Monday, 15 June 2020

1800 My Options - Victoria's pro-choice, free and confidential phone line for sexual and reproductive health - today received its 10,000th call since launching in March 2018.

An average of 87 women per week have been assisted to find accurate and reliable information, and the trusted health services that can meet their needs, thanks to 1800 My Options.

“Contraception, abortion and sexual health services are essential health care, yet providers are often difficult to find. 1800 My Options has ensured that 10,000 women can find the information and services they need in a timely manner”, says Dianne Hill, Women's Health Victoria CEO.

“Access to sexual and reproductive health care services are time critical,” continues Hill, “women used to rely on word of mouth to find contraception and abortion services and often encountered obstruction, misinformation and conscientious objection. Now women can call a confidential phonenumber that will help them find the pro-choice providers that they need.”

A mapped database of over 340 trusted providers of women's health services is a feature of the service, enabling women across Victoria to access local health care providers with confidence that they will receive the service that they need, provided by practitioners that are pro-choice.

The service has been vital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hill continues, “Callers are understandably worried during COVID-19 about access to these vital services. 1800 My Options has been able to reassure callers and help them find the services they need, while working with the service system to monitor access issues and keep up to date with any service changes.”

1800 My Options is a service of Women's Health Victoria, funded as part of the Victorian government's first *Women's sexual and reproductive health: key priorities 2017-2020*. The plan has seen the establishment of 1800 My Options, in addition to eight sexual and reproductive health hubs across the state, and funding for research and services for women's health.



Quote attributable to Dianne Hill, Women's Health Victoria CEO:

"Women's Health Victoria is proud to provide Victorians with the first pro-choice, free and confidential phone line dedicated to contraception, abortion and sexual health. 10,000 callers have shown us how vitally important this service is for all Victorian women."

Quotes attributable to The Hon. Jenny Mikakos, Minister for Health:

"The Victorian government knows that access to trusted and reliable information and services is vital to women's ability to exercise reproductive choice. 1800 My Options ensures that women can exercise this choice."

"10,000 callers have shown us that they value this confidential and free service where they can get up to date, accurate information about their sexual and reproductive health care options, as well as information pathways to services that can meet their individual needs."

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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**