



MEDIA RELEASE

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Universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Access: finally within reach

MELBOURNE – 25 May 2023

A game-changing Federal Senate Inquiry into Universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Access has recommended 36 reforms to the healthcare system to ensure that Australian women and gender diverse people can access the services they need.

Women's Health Victoria commends the findings of the six-month-long inquiry that explored barriers to sexual and reproductive health care access in Australia. "Women's Health Victoria is pleased to note that our key recommendations, relating to workforce capacity and sustainability, cost of service, health literacy, and health service cultural safety have been considered," said Dianne Hill, CEO of Women's Health Victoria.

Among the recommendations are calls for accessible contraception and abortion across Australia, and the establishment of a national telephone service that would leverage the experiences of existing initiatives, such as 1800 My Options and healthdirect, to ensure that it is fit for purpose, delivers accurate local information, and builds on the experiences of services operating in those jurisdictions.

1800 My Options, a service of Women's Health Victoria that's funded by the Victorian State Government, receives over 600 calls per month – mostly from abortion seekers – providing them with pathways to abortion and other SRH services they need. The service recently marked 25,000 calls in five years and over 650 service providers on the database. The service has been independently evaluated, and can serve as a blueprint for high-quality, independent, confidential, pro-choice information services for all people seeking sexual and reproductive healthcare.

Women's Health Victoria made a written submission to the inquiry and presented evidence at the Melbourne hearing. Ms Hill states, "we are pleased to see that the diverse needs of the community have been considered in the inquiry report, and look forward to the Federal Government's response to these long-awaited recommendations". The recent Federal budget did not include any funding for inquiry recommendations - "we hope to see Government financially commit to the recommendations in this report to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services for all Australians" Ms Hill concludes.

-ENDS-

Available for Interview:

Dianne Hill, CEO - Women's Health Victoria

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact:

Charlotte Strong, Manager Brand & Marketing, Women's Health Victoria

M: 0405 393 161

Email: charlotte.strong@whv.org.au



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**