

MEDIA RELEASE

CHILDREN BY CHOICE COMMENDS HIGH COURTS DECISION REGARDING SAFE ACCESS ZONES IN TASMANIA AND VICTORIA

Today the High Court has recognised the right of women and pregnant people to access healthcare privately and in a safe environment. The decision to uphold safe access zone laws in Tasmania and Victoria ensures that pregnant people, clinic staff and support persons will be free of harassment from anti-choice ‘protesters’ within a 150m zone of all clinics that perform termination of pregnancy services.

It is the experience of Children by Choice that anti-choice ‘protests’ near termination clinics can have a detrimental effect on patients, support people, and employees of the clinic. The decision made by the High Court today, makes clear that free speech is not a licence to harm others and infringe aggressively on their decision making processes.

Daile Kelleher, Manager of Children by Choice said: “In the past, clients of Children by Choice have sighted interactions with anti- choice groups outside clinics as a reason for requiring further support in post abortion counselling.”

“We are pleased to see these laws upheld by the Court. Safe access zones are about protecting women and pregnant people’s right to access healthcare safely and privately, without the fear of harassment.”

In Queensland, we have unchallenged legislation preventing anti – choice groups from being within 150 metres of clinics that perform termination of pregnancy services. Western Australia and South Australia are now the only states in the country who do not have safe access zones in place. We call on the State Governments to implement these laws without delay and support women and pregnant people to access basic health care without enduring harassment in their own state.

Children by Choice is an independent Brisbane-based non-profit organisation, committed to providing unbiased information, counselling and referrals for all unplanned pregnancy options – abortion, adoption and parenting. We also provide sexuality education to young people and professional development training for health and community sector professionals. Founded almost 50 years ago, we work to advance Queenslanders' reproductive choices, and to improve access to safe and legal abortion.

Daile Kelleher is available for media comment: 07 3357 9933