

For immediate release

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Bill to introduce Safe Access Zones for abortion services in SA

The South Australian Abortion Action Coalition (saaaac) welcomes the bill, announced by Tammy Franks MLC and Nat Cook MP today, to establish Safe Access Zones around abortion services in South Australia.

The proposed Safe Access Zones would apply to any area within 150 metres of the entrance to an abortion service. This would ensure that clients and staff attending abortion services can arrive and leave free of intimidation and harassment by protestors.

South Australia and Western Australia are the only states without Safe Access Zones. A recent High Court decision upheld Safe Access Zones in Victoria and Tasmania, thereby reasserting the right to unimpeded access to abortion care.

South Australian abortion laws are out of date, obstructing the delivery of best quality abortion care. In 1969 South Australia led the country in reforming the law pertaining to abortion in the Crimes Act. Fifty years later, we are behind most other states where the decriminalisation of abortion has already occurred. It's time for our parliamentarians to step up and catch up. Supporting Safe Access Zones is an important first step.

Quotes attributable to Associate Professor Barbara Baird, academic and South Australian Abortion Action Coalition spokesperson:

Safe Access Zones are crucial for the dignity and safety of women and their supporters accessing abortion care. South Australian parliamentarians can support women's health care by getting behind this bill.

The only people who should be involved in a woman's decision to access abortion care are the woman and her health care professional – not a politician restricting access or an anti-abortion protestor trying to scare women away from health facilities.

Quotes attributable to Brigid Coombe, nurse and former Director of the Pregnancy Advisory Centre, South Australian Abortion Action Coalition spokesperson:

Safe Access Zones are needed at abortion services in this state where protestors regularly attend with the purpose of interfering in women's decision making about their own health care.

This parliament can support women's health care by passing laws to decriminalise abortion and providing Safe Access Zones around abortion services so women can access healthcare free from intimidation.

Health care professionals working with those seeking abortion care have every right to be free from harassment and intimidation as they enter and leave their workplaces. Safe Access Zones will protect this right.

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