

23 September 2020

Today is International Safe Abortion Day

This year on International Safe Abortion Day, saaac joins campaigners around the world in calling for the elimination of inequality of access to abortion care.

COVID-19 has highlighted and exacerbated differential access to safe legal abortion around the world. For some, closed borders and lockdowns have made it impossible to obtain abortions. For some, accessing abortion has meant ignoring directions for safeguarding themselves and others from infection.

In South Australia, where abortion law still sits in the Criminal Law Consolidation Act (1935), barriers faced by women living outside of metropolitan Adelaide are made worse in pandemic conditions. In 2020 when GP services were made available by telehealth across Australia to reduce infection transmission, in other Australian jurisdictions this included Early Medication Abortion. In SA patients seeking abortions have been required to travel to 'prescribed hospitals' to receive abortion care. This has reduced access to abortion and increased exposure to infection risk for patients and staff. The consequences of this during the COVID-19 lockdown are not yet fully known.

We urgently need to decriminalise abortion in SA.

Decriminalisation will reduce gendered and geographical inequalities in health-care provision, bring the state into line with other Australian jurisdictions, and provide much-needed protection in a pandemic situation to those who need and provide abortion care.

Saaac and supporters will gather on the steps of Parliament House at 4pm today to mark International Safe Abortion Day.

Quotes attributed to Barbara Baird:

International Safe Abortion Day is an opportunity to remind South Australians and their political representatives that the decriminalisation of abortion is overdue.

COVID-19 has highlighted and worsened health inequalities around the world and South Australia is no exception when it comes to providing abortion care.

South Australia now stands alone as the only Australian jurisdiction that imposes legal barriers to accessing best-practice abortion care. Decriminalising abortion is as urgent as ever.

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