

## **ASSOCIATION FOR THE LEGAL RIGHT TO ABORTION (WA) INC**

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Dear Community Affairs Committee

### **Inquiry into Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486) Bill 2005.**

The Association for the Legal Right to Abortion (WA) Inc considers that medical decisions should be made on the basis of rigorous and up-to-date medical evidence. The Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) is the appropriate government body to provide this evaluation. A recent research note by the federal parliamentary library service says that given that the current debate over RU 486 is "essentially over questions of risk management" and that management of the risks associated with medicines is an "explicit function of the TGA", that the Government should step back and let the TGA do its job: "The TGA is regarded by the Government as being qualified to manage the risks associated with any therapeutic good that is used (or proposed for use) in Australia. From this, one could reasonably assume that it is also qualified to manage the risks associated with abortifacients such as RU486". (see: <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/RN/2005-06/06rn19.htm>)

### **The vast majority of Australians support a woman's right to choose and believe that abortion is a matter between a woman and her doctor.**

The 2003 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes conducted by the Australian National University found that 81% of Australians support a woman's right to choose and only 9% are against. A recent call for Australian voter's signatures on a petition supporting the removal of the effective ban on RU486 has collected nearly 6000 signatures in its first week. (See: [http://www.getup.org.au/campaign.asp?campaign\\_id=19](http://www.getup.org.au/campaign.asp?campaign_id=19)).

Many Australian, International and World Health Bodies support the availability of RU 486. They include:

- The World Health Organisation
- The Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- The Public Health Association of Australia
- The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (UK)
- The Australian Medical Association
- The American Medical Association
- American Association for Advancement of Science
- Federal Drug Administration (US)
- The Rural Doctors Association of Australia
- Federation of International Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO)
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- Cochrane Collaboration

**No medication or medical procedure is risk-free. However, reputable medical experts say that the health risks associated with RU 486 fall well within acceptable limits**

RU 486 has been used by over 21 million women world in more than 30 countries, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the United States. According to the Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the risk of mortality and serious complications with abortion are “rare” and in some cases may be lower with medical abortion. (see:

<http://www.ranzcog.edu.au/womenshealth/pdfs/Termination-of-pregnancy.pdf>).

Indeed, the adverse drug event rate for RU 486 is very low at .137%. This compares with the over-the-counter drug Claratyne which has an adverse event rate of 12% (87 times higher than Mifepristone).

**The Therapeutics Goods Administration - not politicians, religious leaders, academics or political activists - should decide if RU 486 poses an unacceptable level of risk to Australian women**

The upcoming vote is not about abortion, or the safety of RU 486. It is about *who will decide* if RU 486 is safe and effective enough for Australian patients and we uphold that the Therapeutics Goods Administration - not politicians, religious leaders, academics or political activists - should decide if RU 486 poses an unacceptable level of risk to Australian women.

Yours sincerely,

Margot Boetcher  
President