

MEDIA ALERT

DOES “NOT NOW” MEAN NEVER?

The case for committing to abortion law reform in Victoria

Who:	A Reproductive Choice Australia event
When:	Monday 23 October 2006 - 6pm for 6.15pm start
Where:	Former Melbourne City Watchhouse Russell Street (between La Trobe and Victoria Streets) Melbourne
Why:	For many years Victorian governments have shied away from addressing the problems associated with the state's criminalisation of abortion. The event provides a forum for respected community leaders to examine the issues surrounding law reform, and the social, legal and medical costs of not repealing abortion from the Crimes Act.
Cost:	\$5 donation appreciated
RSVP:	Limited seating – RSVP essential - info@reproductivechoiceaustralia.org.au

Featuring:

Wayne Berry MLA

As ACT Legislative Assembly Member for Ginninderra, Wayne Berry has been a strong advocate and campaigner for women's pro-choice rights for over a decade. From repealing legislation that prevented abortions in the ACT in 1992 to introducing legislation that decriminalised abortion in the ACT in 2002, Wayne's consistent efforts have provided great assistance in strengthening women's rights in the ACT. Wayne will be presenting on *"What really happens to politicians who stand up for reproductive rights?"*

"The important thing that I learned from my experience as a campaigner for abortion law reform was that most in the community supported the actions I took and my stance earned their respect. To listen to the opposition you'd have thought that the end of the world, and my political career, was nigh," said Wayne Berry.

Lesley Vick LLB MA

Lesley Vick is an academic legal researcher specialising in medical ethics and the law. Lesley is former President of the Abortion Law Repeal Association (Vic), former Secretary and Vice-president of the Family Planning Association of Victoria and immediate Past President of the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance. She has also been actively involved in the Women's Electoral Lobby and the National Foundation for Australian Women, and is a co-editor of Dissent Magazine. An authority on Victoria's abortion laws, Lesley's presentation will explore the connection between *"Reproductive rights and reproductive health"*.

"Women's reproductive health is inextricably linked to their reproductive rights. A woman's reproductive health is compromised or adversely affected if she is denied access to reproductive information, services, choice and support," said Lesley Vick.

Dr Lachlan de Crespigny

Dr Lachlan de Crespigny is an Obstetrician Gynaecologist at Melbourne Ultrasound for Women, and was Head of Ultrasound at Royal Women's Hospital at the time of the controversial abortion case. With first-hand experience of the impact of Victoria's abortion laws on medical service provision in the state, Lachlan will provide an in-depth analysis as to why *"Victoria's abortion laws are a health hazard for doctors and their patients"*.

"Uncertain laws and the risk of criminal proceedings are forcing doctors to reconsider their involvement in abortions sought by women and couples after the devastating diagnosis of a fetal abnormality. This dire situation simply cannot continue," said Dr Lachlan de Crespigny.

The event will be hosted by **Dr Leslie Cannold**. Dr Cannold is a medical ethicist, researcher, columnist and author of two award-winning books on reproductive choice: *The Abortion Myth* and *What, No Baby?*.

"Abortion must be repealed from the Crimes Act. This is because as recent events in WA, NSW and Victoria make clear, doctors and women involved in abortion are still at risk of legal harassment and criminal prosecution. Repeal is also needed because the health aspects of abortion are best regulated like all other medical procedures, while the moral aspects of abortion are best managed by individual women and couples," said Dr Leslie Cannold.

About Reproductive Choice Australia:

Reproductive Choice Australia is a coalition of organisations and individuals dedicated to protecting and enhancing women's reproductive rights in Australia. For information on Reproductive Choice Australia, please visit www.reproductivechoiceaustralia.org.au

**To arrange interviews, photo opportunities or to receive additional information, please contact:
Samantha Smith - Mob: 0418 576 129**

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