

As misinformation swirls around the Senate Inquiry eminent medical researcher presents the facts: Mifepristone (RU486) and abortion

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Dr Edith Weisberg, AM the world renowned sexual and reproductive health researcher is determined Australian women will be able to make up their minds about access to medical abortion in full knowledge of the facts. Today Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia (SH&FPA) released [“The Facts” Mifepristone and Abortion](#) - a brief but carefully researched document listing relevant facts and figures (attached).

“I am extremely concerned about a number of statements made regarding the use of Mifepristone RU486 for medical abortion which are both incorrect and presented in an emotive manner without relevant references to the research”, says Dr Weisberg.

Dr Weisberg is the coordinator of Australia’s major research work on Mifepristone and is one of Australia’s best informed on its use. She is also Director of Research, Sydney Centre for Reproductive Health Research.

Dr Weisberg has made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486) Bill 2005 on behalf of SH&FPA. The Senate is conducting hearings into whether the ban on Mifepristone in Australia should be lifted.

Mifepristone and other abortifacients are the only drugs requiring the approval of the Minister for Health to be used in Australia. Mifepristone is used extensively in Europe (including Italy), the USA and the UK but is effectively banned in Australia.

All other drugs in Australia fall under the jurisdiction of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

A controversial amendment to the relevant Act was passed in 1996 when Senator Harradine argued that the drug should be made illegal. The amendment is known as the Harradine amendment.

A record number of submissions have been made to the Inquiry however many are reportedly propaganda-based rather than evidence-based responses to the issue of the un-banning of Mifepristone.

Information/interviews

In NSW contact Jane Singleton 0411 013 269

In other States

ACT Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT

Jane Singleton 0411 013 269

QLD Kelsey Powell Ph 07 3250 0227 m 0417 720 238

CEO Family Planning QLD

TAS Michelle Swallow Ph 03 6228 5422 m 0417 354 833

CEO Family Planning TAS

VIC Lynne Jordan. Ph 03 9257 0140. m 0409 141 996

CEO Family Planning VIC

WA Rebecca Smith Ph 08 9227 6177 m 0416 227 807

Family Planning WA

If unavailable please call Jane Singleton 0411 013 269