

MEDIA RELEASE**For immediate distribution**

LABOR'S PLAN IS A GAME-CHANGER FOR WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

MELBOURNE – 6 March 2019

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) is thrilled by the announcement that Labor will deliver Australia's first ever National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy if elected.

This announcement affirms what women's health advocates have been saying for decades – that supporting women's reproductive choice is essential for women's health and gender equality.

In particular, we strongly support Labor's commitments to:

- progress the decriminalisation of abortion across Australia
- ensure consistent and equitable access to termination services in public hospitals; and
- improve access to affordable contraception options

We also welcome the creation of national phone referral service for abortion service information. WHV has designed and implemented Victoria's first statewide phone and information service for sexual and reproductive health, *1800 My Options*, and looks forward to sharing our expertise to inform the design of the new national service.

We are also delighted by the commitment to restore funding for the Australian Women's Health Network so it can continue to provide specialist expertise in women's health at a national level.

With strong leadership at the national level, we are confident that this landmark commitment should translate into improved health outcomes for women and girls, their families and communities across Australia. WHV calls on all parties to show similar support for women's reproductive rights.

Quote attributable to Women's Health Victoria CEO, Rita Butera

This commitment is a game changer for women's reproductive health. It represents a huge step forward in addressing the barriers women face in accessing essential reproductive health services, including abortion.

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About Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) is a not-for-profit, state-wide women's health promotion, information and advocacy service, focused on improving the lives of Victorian women. WHV works collaboratively with women, health professionals, policy makers and community organisations to influence and inform health policy and service delivery for women. The work of WHV is underpinned by a social model of health and a commitment to reducing inequities in health which arise from social, economic and environmental determinants. **For more information, visit whv.org.au**