



**family
planning
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Sexual & Reproductive Health
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Media Release

29 August 2008

FPV supports Abortion Bill

Family Planning Victoria (FPV) has announced its support for the *Abortion Law Reform Bill 2008* as tabled in the Victorian Parliament on 20 August.

Dr Sally Cockburn, newly elected chair of FPV's Board of Directors, said: 'FPV supports the Bill in its current form and urges Parliamentarians to do the same.

'This is the Bill most Victorians have been waiting for. It brings Victorian law into line with current practice and gives certainty to Victorian women and their doctors.

'If passed, it will enable Victorian women and their doctors to make health care decisions, safe in the knowledge they are acting legally, and that is vital to a safe and effective health service.

'It's an important step forward, and we urge all members of Parliament to support it', Dr Cockburn said.

Dr Cockburn said FPV had concerns about some of the suggested amendments receiving media coverage, including those around mandatory counselling.

'FPV has been providing counselling services for many years. We know that if someone is compelled to attend counselling, counselling is much less effective. Counselling should be available for those women who request it, but as the need for counselling is a clinical decision, mandatory counselling has no place in legislation.

'The most effective approach is to ensure all women have access to impartial, skilled and professional support and are offered referral to a full range of support services and choices', Dr Cockburn said.

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FPV is the leading Victorian provider of youth sexuality education and clinical services.

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Comment available from Dr Sally Cockburn.

