

## MEDIA RELEASE

19 July 2007

# “Time to decriminalize abortion” Liberty Victoria

Liberty Victoria supports measures to decriminalize abortion.

“Regulation of abortion should be like any other medical procedure,” Anne O’Rourke, Vice-President of Liberty Victoria, said, “the standard principles that govern general medical procedures should apply to abortion. We do not need to implement new laws”.

“In a free and democratic society it is not the role of government to intervene directly into the most personal decisions of families or individuals about their consensual sexual activity nor into decisions on how many children they wish to have nor how often they should have children. Such interventions are more usually found in the family policies of totalitarian regimes.”

“The provisions in the Crimes Act 1958 are an inappropriate interference with women’s bodies. The abortion provisions need to be taken out of the Crimes Act. The threat of a criminal conviction should not hang over the heads of doctors, women or their partners.”

“In amending the law the Victorian Parliament needs to take into account Australia’s international legal obligations. Australia is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Article 16 provides that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.

“The law in Victoria should be brought into conformity with that right. While Liberty Victoria supports freedom of religion and a person’s right to make free decisions in their choice of religious faith, Liberty does not believe that personal religious belief should govern public policy. Ministers do not have a right to impose their religious views on the public nor should Parliament allow them to do so”.

“Those who oppose abortion need not seek to have an abortion. They do not have the right to prevent others from making their own decisions in respect of reproduction. Abortion should be decriminalized”.

Media contacts: Anne O’Rourke, Vice-President, 0409 334 581  
Julian Burnside, President, QC 0412 157 230

---

**President**  
Julian Burnside QC  
**Immediate Past President**  
Brian Walters SC

**Vice Presidents**  
Jamie Gardiner  
Anne O’Rourke  
Michael Pearce SC  
Prof Spencer Zifcak

**Secretary**  
Georgia King-Siem  
**Assist. Secretary**  
Sean Huggins

**Treasurer**  
Robert Niemann

**Committee**  
Greg Connellan  
Diane Sisely

Liz Curran  
Marian Steele  
Penny Underwood

Urfa Masood  
Larry Stillman  
Melanie Young

Lucie O’Brien  
Jonathon Wilkinson