

THE FERTILITY CONTROL CLINIC

The Fertility Control Clinic is Victoria's largest free-standing private abortion providing clinic. It was originally set up by the pioneering abortion rights campaigner, Dr. Bertram Wainer, in 1972. We have been serving the women of our community for thirty years.

Our staff includes a gynaecologist, GP's specialising in family planning, theatre and general nursing staff, a team of pathology scientists, a counselling team, reception and administrative staff, and a Chinese-Vietnamese interpreter. The Fertility Control Clinic provides a full range of family planning services including termination of pregnancy, vasectomy and all forms of available contraception, as well as other important women's health services (pap smears, colposcopies etc). The Clinic provides a crucial and vital health service to the people of metropolitan and regional Victoria, other Australian states (notably Tasmania), and women from other countries who are studying, holidaying or have migrated to Australia. Women and their families present to our counselling team with a range of issues. Understandably, women who present with a history of sexual abuse can find examination and surgery particularly daunting. Our longevity and unique placement in this area of women's health means that our doctors and staff are particularly attuned to women's needs, and our quality of care is optimised by the presence of a female doctor and operator and female counsellors and nursing staff all within a women-centred environment.

By preventing unwanted pregnancy via contraceptive advice and treatment, and by providing termination of problem pregnancies, The Fertility Control Clinic has a direct impact on decreasing maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality, and economic and socioemotional impoverishment.

Clinic staff, patients or passersby face a chronic situation where the right to protest by anti-choice groups has taken precedence over the rights of individuals to safely access a health service and workplace. It is a violation of women's rights to privacy, respect and safety in accessing health services, and in undertaking their employment.

Amongst health professionals it is recognised that protester tactics can be psychologically and physically harmful, especially when targeting people already feeling vulnerable and in a high state of anxiety associated with the stressors of facing an unplanned pregnancy, operation, or health-related medical or counselling consultation. High anxiety levels may increase the physical pain women experience during or following examination and surgery.