



The
Hampton Park
Women's Health
Care Centre

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The Operation and The Law

The importance of an unplanned pregnancy was addressed and recently acknowledged in 2008 when the Victorian Parliament made amendments to the 1958 Victorian Crimes Act. In the 2008 The Abortion Law Reform Act decriminalized termination of pregnancy and set out guidelines for when abortion can take place. Any women of any age* can attend an abortion clinic in Victoria and access abortion until she is 24 weeks pregnancy. Abortion after 24 weeks is legal though it is usually performed for severe fetal abnormalities. Two doctors must agree that the termination is necessary, considering the woman's medical, physical, psychological and social circumstances. Under Victorian law a health practitioner who has a conscientious objection to providing abortion information must refer any woman seeing information about abortion services to another doctor who does not object. Doctors and nurses must perform an abortion in emergency situations where it is necessary to preserve the life of the pregnant woman, even if they object to abortion in general.

The first legal reforms came in 1969, which allowed doctors to perform the operation if certain criteria were met. Before then women often sought help by untrained persons, resulting in many complications. This led to community fear regarding the safety of a surgical termination of pregnancy. Since the law was changed in 1969 doctors who have under gone training now perform the operation. Statistically, mortality rates demonstrate that pregnancy termination is now ten times safer than childbirth. Our centre is able to assist with pregnancy termination up to 13 weeks gestation.

*Patients under the age of 16 will require a parent or legal guardian to consent for treatment. Please call our clinic if you have any questions regarding this matter.