

Australian Overseas Abortion Aid Finally Clear And Commendable

Written by MARIE STOPES | International Australia
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Five months after Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith made the decision to amend the AusAID Family Planning Guidelines, the long awaited revised Guidelines have finally been released.

The Guidelines now state that Australian international aid funding can be used for surgical or medical abortion, up to 20 weeks gestation, in countries where abortion is legal. This is now in line with the rights to abortion that Australian women have had for many years.

Marie Stopes International Australia would like to congratulate Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith for his approval of the new Guidelines and commend Mr Bob McMullan, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, for his tireless commitment to the health of women in developing countries.

“With one woman dying every seven minutes from an unsafe abortion somewhere in the world, Australians should feel proud that they will be able to help save the lives of so many women who live in poverty, without access to good reproductive health care, on the margins of our global society,” said Ary Laufer, Executive Officer and Regional Director, Marie Stopes International Australia.

“I feel now that I can look the women that we help in the eye and know that as an Australian, we are doing everything they can do to help them – that we are saving the lives of real women who are someone’s mother, sister, daughter or friend.”

Every year nearly 530,000 women become the statistics that comprise maternal mortality, with 13% of these deaths attributed to unsafe abortion[1] - deaths which are preventable.

Under the previous AusAID Family Planning Guidelines no international Australian aid funding was allowed to be used in relation to abortion including; services, education, information and informing women on how to prevent the situation of undergoing an unsafe abortion.

“There is no doubt in my mind that the previous Family Planning Guidelines were contributing to the increasing rates of maternal mortality, especially in the Asia Pacific region,” said Mr Laufer.

“I have seen for myself the impact that maternal mortality is having on the communities that we help in Viet Nam and Cambodia, and I am sure that these communities will now see great changes.

“Australia is demonstrating its commitment to marginalised women, in strong hard writing, which shows that the Australian Government finally believes that women in developing countries should have the same rights as women here in Australia.”

Source: <http://www.mariestopes.org.au>

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