



the women's  
the royal women's hospital

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## Media Release

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# The Women's welcomes TGA approval to provide medical abortion with mifepristone (RU486)

The Royal Women's Hospital (the Women's) today welcomed Therapeutic Goods Administration approval for several of the hospital's clinicians to prescribe mifepristone (RU 486) in order to provide medical abortion; in specific circumstances.

The Women's will offer medical abortion with mifepristone as an alternative to surgical abortion when the clinician considers that this method of abortion is clinically necessary, for example, when surgical abortion carries higher than usual risks or likelihood of failure or surgical abortion cannot be provided.

Mifepristone is a synthetic steroid that inhibits the actions of progesterone in the maintenance of early pregnancy. The drug is utilised by clinicians throughout the world to induce a medical termination of early pregnancy.

Currently, Australian abortion service providers almost exclusively perform termination of early pregnancy via a surgical procedure because alternatives to mifepristone are less effective.

The Women's Associate Director, Women's Services, Dr Chris Bayly said: "Research has shown that mifepristone, taken in conjunction with synthetic prostaglandins, can be safely used to induce medical abortion.

"Many women undergoing a termination of pregnancy want to access safe medical abortion in preference to surgical abortion. We believe access to medical abortion is an alternative method of abortion that should be made routinely available via clinicians.

"International evidence does not show that the routine availability of mifepristone results in an increase in the total number of abortions being performed. Instead, experience indicates that medical abortion simply replaces a proportion of the surgical abortions being undertaken," Dr Bayly said.

The Women's Chief Executive, Dale Fisher, said: "We remain optimistic that in the near future a pharmaceutical company will seek to register mifepristone with the TGA and that the TGA will licence the drug for use, thereby negating the need for individual medical practitioners to apply for authorised prescriber status.



“In the interim, we felt strongly that it was appropriate for the Women’s, as a leader in women’s health services, to lead the introduction of this important improvement in health services for women.”

In contrast to Australia, women in the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and many other countries worldwide are routinely able to access medical abortion services via the administration of mifepristone and prostaglandin.

**Further information:**

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