



Q: WHAT DO AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WANT FOR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR?

A: TO GET POLITICS OUT OF MEDICINE

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The Prime Minister's decision to delay the vote in Federal Parliament about RU-486 is a slap in the face to Australian women and a missed opportunity for the Government to defend the integrity of Australia's drug evaluation system.

The TGA is a unit of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing that ensures all medicines and medical devices made available to Australians are of adequate quality and are both safe and effective. But ten years ago, a crass political horse trade saw the government pass amendments to the TGA that effectively banned RU-486 and drugs like it, in exchange for the vote of anti-choice author former-Senator Brian Harradine on Telstra.

Now the Government is at it again, finding the time to ram through its welfare and industrial relations laws with minimal debate before Christmas, but too busy to deal with – little less support - a Democrats amendment that would remove the Harradine amendments, and allow the TGA to assess the safety and efficacy of RU-486.

“We are furious on behalf of the women of this country who have once again become pawns in the political games of those meant to represent them”, says Reproductive Choice Spokesperson Leslie Cannold. “It is time for the Government to insist that politics have no place in medicine and to not just allow the Democrats amendment to the TGA to be debated before Christmas, but to support that amendment.”

The coordinator of Children by Choice, Cait Calcutt, agrees. “Women have waited nearly a decade for politicians to decide that politics has no place in medicine and that the TGA, not the clearly-biased Health Minister, should decide whether RU 486 is safe and effective. It's unfair to ask them to wait any longer. The vote needs to happen now”, she said.

Reproductive Choice Australia is a coalition of over 20 organisations including Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia, Children By Choice, the Public Health Association of Australia, the Australian Women's Health Network, the Women's Electoral Lobby, and all state based pro-choice coalitions.

“Reproductive Choice Australia believes in supporting women to make the best choices for themselves and their families in the case of an unplanned pregnancy,” Dr Cannold said.

For more information, contact Dr Leslie Cannold on 0417 114 859