

NEW NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH POLICY

Points to consider when writing your submission are:

- Request the Government **listen** to women and their needs. Allow alternative voices to be heard.
- Stress that natural health flows from using natural methods of achieving a pregnancy, or working with your fertility, instead of against it.
- Suggest the Government fund small groups, which are already doing a lot of good work for women at a local level. Support for organizations set up by women themselves (eg Billings Ovulation Method) is a good idea.
- Big organizations do not always cater well at a local level, are more costly to run and often do not offer a variety of services, such as natural family planning or pregnancy support.
- These small support groups are very cost effective. Using the Billings Method instead of IVF, would cost the Government far less.
- Provide a diverse range of services, because not all women fit into the one mould.
- Women are at risk when they are not given all the facts. Failure to disclose all information disempowers women. In particular women should be informed of the abortion/breast cancer link. For information on this issue see “The Abortion-Breast Cancer Link: How Politics Trumped Science and Informed Consent” by Karen Malec (Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, Vol 8, Number 2, Summer 2003) and “The Federal Government and Academic Texts as Barriers to Informed Consent” by Dr Angela Lanfranchi (Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, Vol 13, Number 1, Spring 2008).
- Encourage women to take responsibility for their own health. Women need to be given relevant information to be able to do so eg to be informed of the abortion/breast cancer link which is a major risk for women’s health; to be advised where to go to access natural methods of fertility management, which are cost effective and free of side effects. In particular, women should be informed that natural methods can help them conceive and are a safe, natural, cost effective and successful alternative to artificial reproductive technologies.
- Women need good, accurate, authentic information. In relation to the serious issue of the rising incidence of breast cancer diagnoses, it is primarily the government’s responsibility to disseminate this information to women through Health Departments, Cancer Councils, professional medical associations (such as the Australian Medical Association) and doctors themselves. Referral from GPs and other primary health carers (eg maternal health nurses) for appropriate advice and assistance on natural methods of fertility management should be encouraged – for eg to the Billings Ovulation Method, which has been doing this work very successfully for many years.
- Greater access to information nationwide would enable better decision-making. The easiest and quickest way of disseminating information is through the internet, which is not readily available Australia wide, especially broadband.
- Better testing of medications before releasing them onto the market eg, HRT was found to cause heart attacks and ovarian cancer. Gardasil is believed to be implicated in 32 deaths and many thousands of adverse effects.
- Consistency of approach is needed. It is counterproductive to be concerned about the sexualization of young girls while allowing highly sexual advertisements in public places; or to be trying to prevent STIs while giving information to teenagers which encourages “recreational sex”.