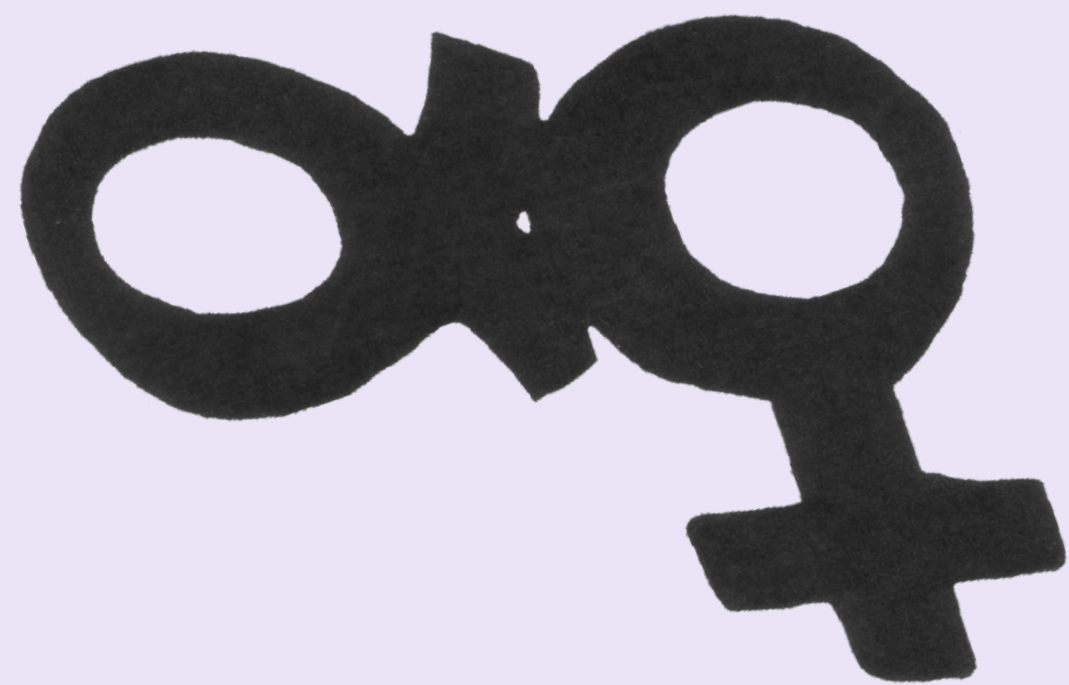


We wish to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Wangal clan of the Dharug peoples.



We acknowledge the impact colonialism has had on Aboriginal peoples and Country, and that this impact continues today.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging,
and to Aboriginal people joining us here today.



50 Years of

WAAC

1972 - 2022

1970s



1900 To 1972

NSW Crimes Act 1900

Division 12 Attempts to procure abortion

82 Administering drugs etc to herself by woman with child

Whosoever, being a woman with child,
unlawfully administers to herself any drug or noxious thing, or
unlawfully uses any instrument or other means,
with intent in any such case to procure her miscarriage,
shall be liable to imprisonment for ten years.

83 Administering drugs etc to woman with intent

Whosoever:
unlawfully administers to, or causes to be taken by, any woman, whether with child or not, any drug or noxious thing, or
unlawfully uses any instrument or other means,
with intent in any such case to procure her miscarriage,
shall be liable to imprisonment for ten years.

84 Procuring drugs etc

Whosoever unlawfully supplies or procures any drug or noxious thing, or any instrument or thing whatsoever, knowing that the same is intended to be unlawfully used with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether with child or not, shall be liable to imprisonment for five years.

1900 To 1972



In 1920, the crown prosecutor called Annie Turnbull (pictured in 1894) 'the worst woman in Sydney'. She was charged with operating an unlicensed hospital. The purpose? To perform abortions. Annie appeared regularly before the courts for abortion related crimes from 1885 to 1920 (when she was charging 10 Pounds per abortion), including murder and 'using an implement'. Twice sentenced to 7 years goal, Annie was also ordered to pay fines of 50 pounds on a number of occasions. Just as often, because the testimony was 'hearsay', she was acquitted.

NSW State Archives 'Collections'

1900 To 1972

458

THIS FORM TO BE CAREFULLY FOLDED IN SIX PARTS

No. *Long Bay* Name *Belinda Turnbull*

Date when Portrait was taken *20th May* 192*0*

Native place *Newcastle*

Year of Birth *26.5.1864*

Arrived in State { Ship
Year

Trade or occupation (previous to conviction) *Nurse*

Religion *Roman Catholic*

Education, degree of *Read & Write*

Height, without shoes *5* feet *3* inches

Weight in lbs. { On committal *196*
On Discharge

Colour of hair *Brown*

Colour of Eyes *Hazel*

Marks, or special features *Scar on left arm*


(No. of previous Portrait.....)

CONVICTIONS.

Where and When	Offence	Sentence
<i>Maitland L.L. 6 4 99</i>	<i>Using an Instrument to procure abortion</i>	<i>4 years P.S.</i>
<i>Central L.L. 9 6 99</i>	<i>do do</i>	<i>4 years P.S.</i>
<i>Central P.L. 25 2 18</i>	<i>conducting premises as a private hospital without authority</i>	<i>Released on license 1.6.03</i>
<i>Central L.L. 17 5 20</i>	<i>manslaughter</i>	<i>5 years P.S.</i>

Annie operated her 'unlicensed' private hospitals in Newcastle, Maitland and Sydney, using several aliases (such as Belinda in 1920, see photograph at left) and changing premises regularly. Too well known to police to avoid scrutiny for long, she was constantly before the courts. After being acquitted at a final trial in 1923, Annie, now in her 60s, disappears from public record for a time. She may have retired. The 'worst woman in Sydney' died in 1928 - but her dubious title was soon being used to describe Kate Leigh, Sydney's gangster 'queen' of the 1920s and 30s.

1900 To 1972



Historically, the colonies that constituted pre-Federation Australia prohibited abortion based on laws replicating 19th century British criminal prohibitions. These had always allowed the exception of “therapeutic” abortions performed by doctors to save the woman’s life.

In 1938, the English case of Bourne (King v Bourne [1939] 1 KB 687) clarified the criminal defence of abortions performed by doctors to save a woman’s life, broadly interpreted to include psychological factors. The judgement confirmed the authority of the medical establishment over abortion and was understood as persuasive authority in Australian jurisdictions.

1900 To 1972

1961

THE PILL

The release of the oral contraceptive pill 'Anovlar' in Australia on 1st February, 1961 changed women's lives. Only available to married women at first, it was illegal for the manufacturers (German pharmaceutical company Schering) to advertise the contraceptive.

Classed as a 'luxury', the pill was taxed at 27.5 per cent.

Despite all that, women wanted the pill because it promised freedom from unwanted pregnancy. Unfortunately, the pill was not safe for all users, and good consumer advice was often not available.

In a popular move in 1972, incoming Prime Minister Gough Whitlam abolished the luxury tax on all contraceptives in his first 10 days of office, and added the pill to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme list, reducing its cost to \$1 per month.

1970s

*Because
our work is never done and
underpaid or boring and we are the first
to get the sack and what we look like is more
important than what we do and if we get raped it's
our fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked
it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if
we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and
if we love women it's because we can't get a man and if we ask
our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and if we stand
up for our rights we're aggressive and unfeminine and if we
don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married
we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and we
still can't get adequate safe contraception but men can walk
on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy
we're made to feel guilty about abortion and*

..... for lots and lots of other reasons

***we are part of the
Women's Liberation
Movement***

by Joyce Stevens
(early 1970s)



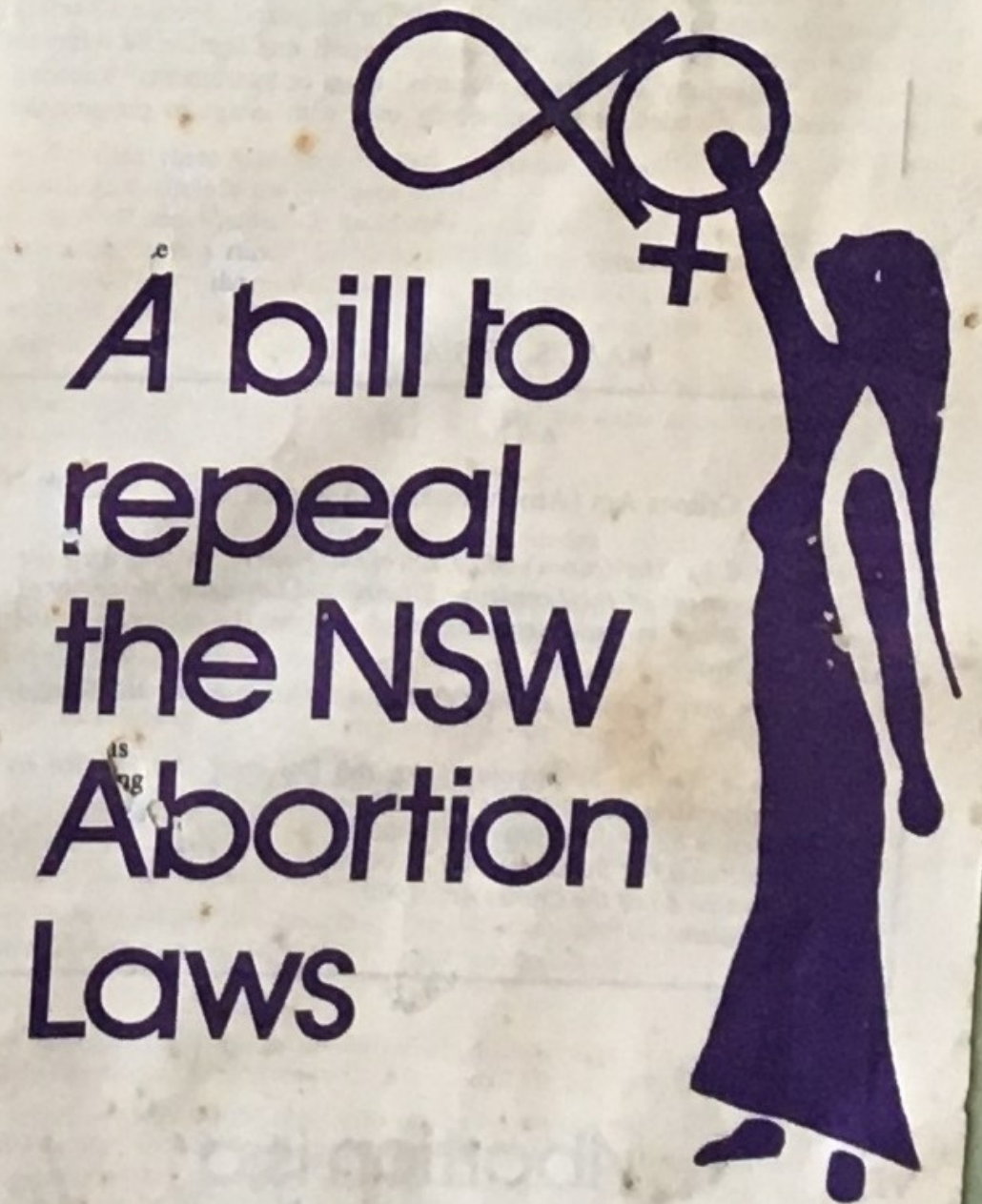
Joyce Stevens OAM

Photo courtesy Susanne Martain, ISIS Creations

WAAC HISTORY

- Aug 72 WAAC formed
- May 73 McKenzie Lamb Bill, Federal Parliament
- 30th June 73 WAAC Demo
- 73 Right to Choose No 1
- 7th March 74 Public Mtg. Production of "What have you done for me lately?"
- Early 74 Right to Choose No 2
- 11th May 74 WAAC Demo - one year after McKenzie Lamb Bill
- May 74 Right to Choose No 3
- Mid 74 Preterm opens
- June 74 WAAC National Mtg in Melbourne
- July 74 Right to Choose No 4
- July/Aug 74 WAAC sponsored National tour of Jessica Star from WONAC NZ.
- Sept 74 WAAC National Mtg in Sydney
- Late 74 Right to Choose no 5
- 1975 International Women's Year - WAAC receives \$10,000 from Fed govt for Conference (June), publication of "A Woman's Guide to Abortion, Why, How, Where", Publication of migrant language versions of same (migrant booklets actually not published till 1978)
- Feb/March 75 Right to Choose No 6

1970s



1970s

Women's Abortion Action Campaign (WAAC) demands:



Abortion is a woman's right to choose

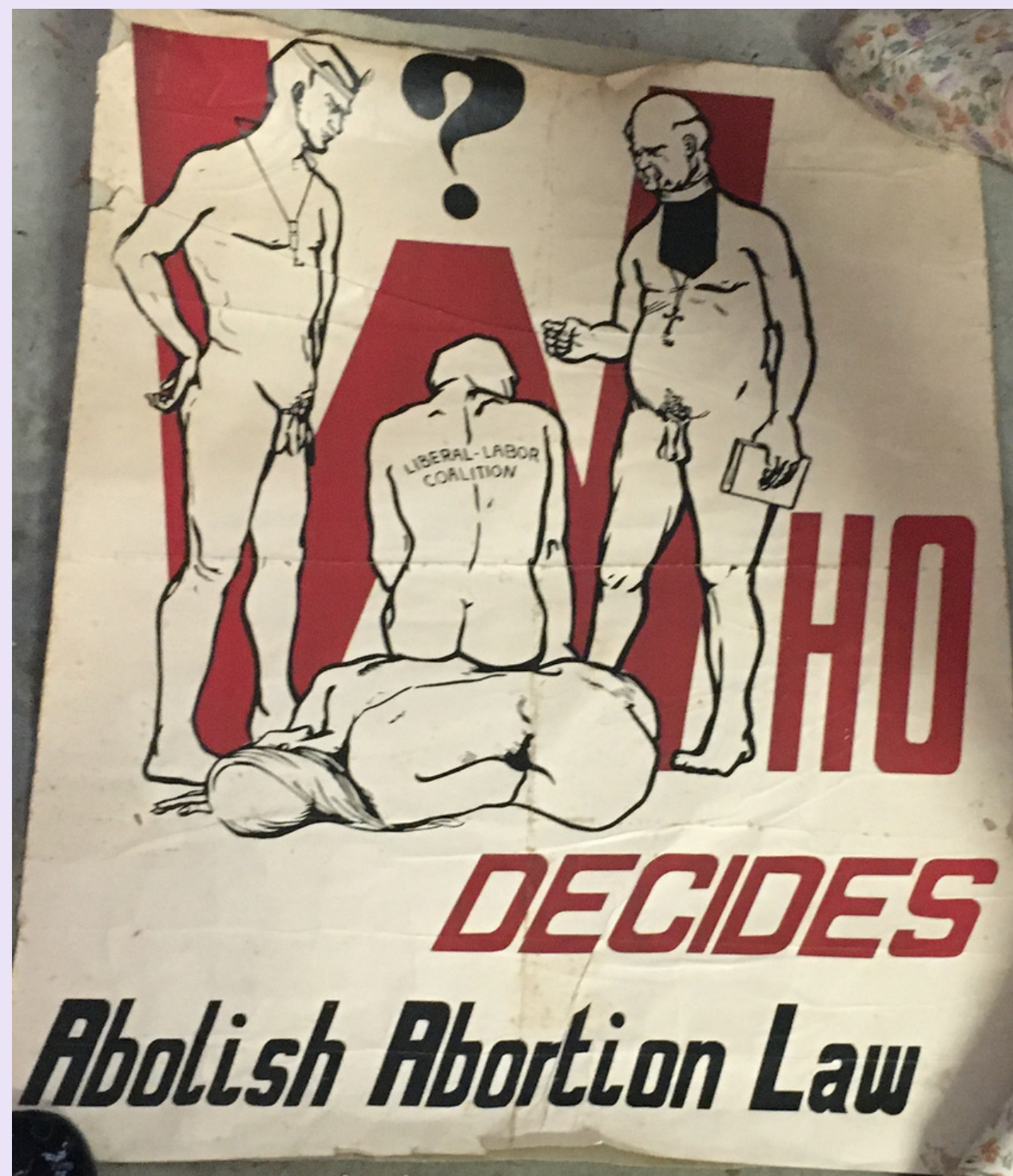
Repeal of all abortion laws

Free, safe abortion on demand

Free, safe contraception on demand

No forced sterilisation

1970s



April 75 Preterm burns down. PSI opens

Throughout 75 WAAC Forums

14 & 15th June 75 WAAC organised National Abortion Conference in Sydney
includes - production of packages "Abortion and You"
- sponsoring of visit by French abortionist activist
Giselle Halimi and launching of English translation of
her book "The Bobigny Affair"

Mid 75 Right to Choose No 7

From June Conference - "Liason Committee" formed to continue National
organisation.

Aug 75 WAAC speaks at govt sponsored conference "Women's Health in a
Changing society" (Brisbane),
organisation around Harrold Bill first reading

Late 75 Right to Choose No 8 - includes Nat. Conf. report

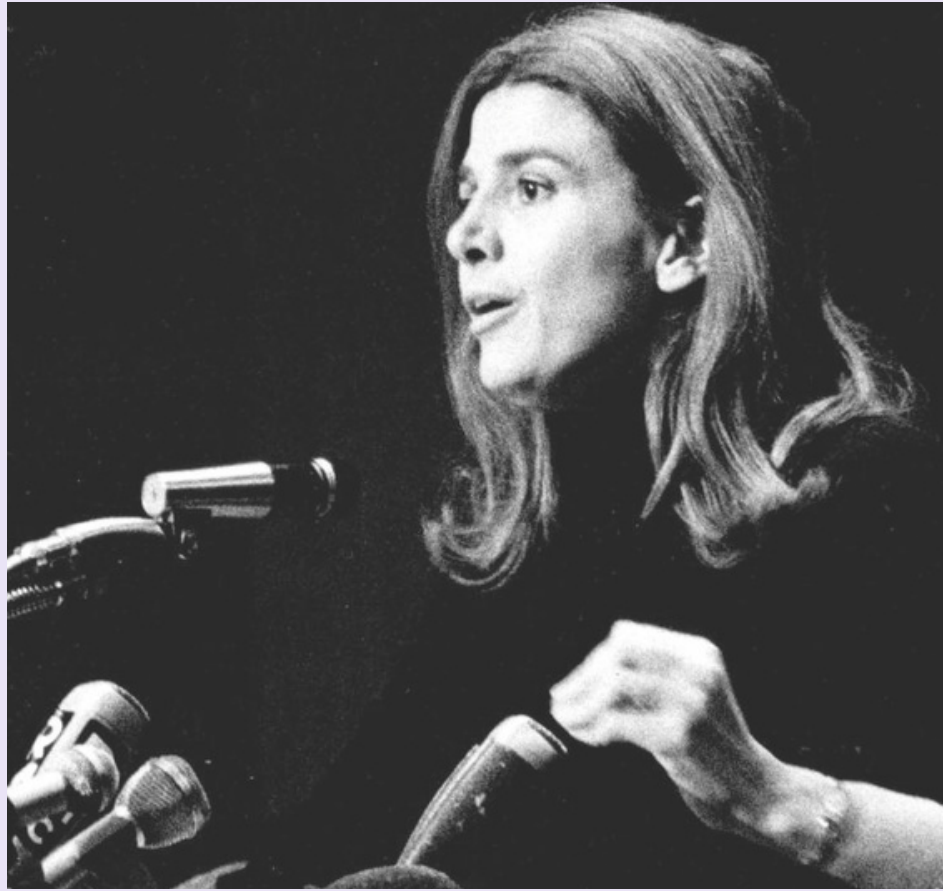
Sept/Oct 75 national WAAC demo - organised by Liason Committee

Dec 6, 75 Right to Choose No 9

Dec 75

Dec 75

First hearing Liverpool Case.



Gisele Halimi

1970s

Another significant group at work in Queensland during the 1970's was Women's Abortion Action Campaign (or Coalition). Branches were established in all States of Australia and New Zealand by the early 1970's ... Their aims were to promote the repeal/reform of restrictive abortion laws, to promote sex education and family planning programmes and to oppose rigorously forced sterilisation.

Australia-wide, they circulated an informative feminist newssheet... which detailed happenings around the world and printed articles relating to female sexuality. Another of their publications, “A Woman's Guide to Abortion – Why, How, Where”, was available in several languages and was widely distributed and used throughout Queensland. W.A.A.C. was strong in Victoria and New South Wales and to a lesser extent in South Australia, the three States that had more liberal laws. In Sydney, during International Women's Year they organised a National Conference with leading French feminist lawyer Gizelle (sic) Halimi as the main speaker. Initially, the Women's Centre at Red Hill was head-quarters for Queensland W.A.A.C. and most of their members had liaison with other women's groups.

Struggle For Choice, by Beryl Holmes et al, 1982

סמל 1979



1970s



1970s

*A survey conducted by the
Preterm Foundation in 1976
found that 7.6% of its clients had
attempted abortion before
presenting at the clinic.*

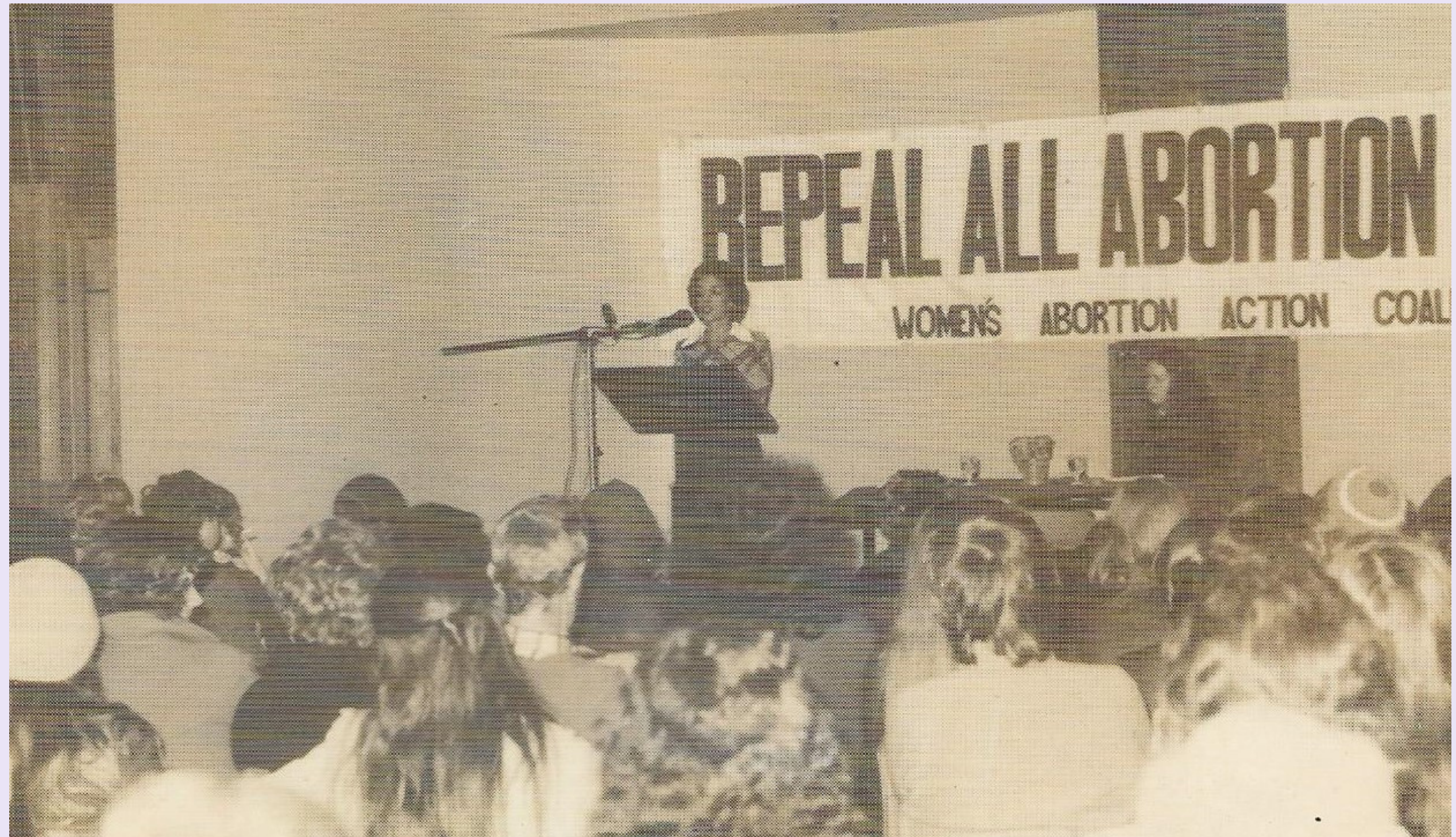
Abortion techniques in Australia: a history, by J Bird 1981

1970s

Feb 76 Liverpool Abortion Defence Committee (LADC) formed.
March 76 Right to Choose No 10 - includes details of Harrold Bill
March 76 Second hearing Liverpool Case
12th March 76 WAAC public mtg Leichhardt Town Hall re Harrold Bill
April 76 WAAC survey of candidates in State election
20th April 76 Public mtg WAAC and LADC Teachers Fed Auditorium
1st May 76 - State Labour Govt. elected.
May 76 Harrold Bill lapses and Harrold loses his seat in State election.
May 76 Right to Choose No 11
Spring 76 Right to Choose No 12
Late 76 WAAC launches Repeal Bill campaign
Nov 76 Nat WAAC Conf in Brisbane
Dec 76 "No Bill" granted in Liverpool case.
Summer (early) 77 Right to Choose No 13
Feb 77 Control referral service moves to Dymocks Bldg
Autumn 77 Right to Choose No 14
July 77 Bessie opens
Sept 77 Preterm sacks founder Emmi Snyder
Sept 77 Repeal Bill squashed (see p12 RtC No 15)
Dec 77 Repressive abortion laws pushed through in NZ.

STOP
the
HARROLD
BILL

1970s



סמל 1979



סמל 1979



סוף 1970



1970s



Vicki Potempa



Margaret Kirkby

1970s



Susan Ryan AO

Summer (early) 78 Right to Choose No 15

Feb 78 WAAC organised Demo re NZ laws

Early 78 Govt ordinance to prohibit abortion clinics in Canberra

Feb 78 Hunt inquiry (re Health Funds and abortion) - WAAC leaflets and petitions.

June 78 International Campaign for Abortion Rights formed in London

Winter 78 Right to Choose No 16

July 78 Right to Choose "Extra"

Aug 78 Joan Shields NZ Abortion activist tour;

Spring 78 Right to Choose No 17

Sometime 78 Migrant booklets completed and launched

15 Sept 78 WAAE Demo in solidarity with NZ day of action

Oct 78 Susan Ryan presents motion to disallow Canberra clinic ordinance -lost.

1979



סנס 1979



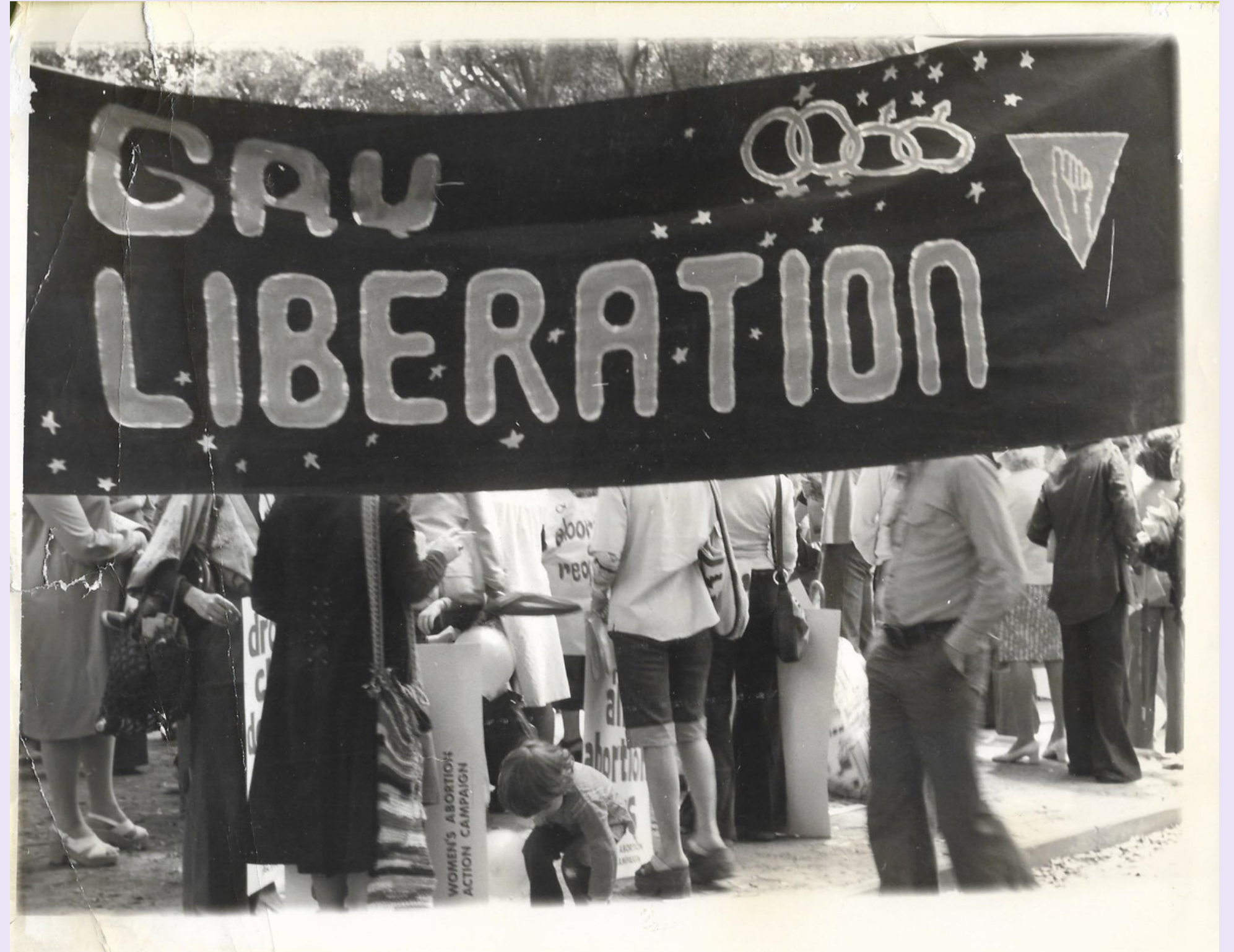
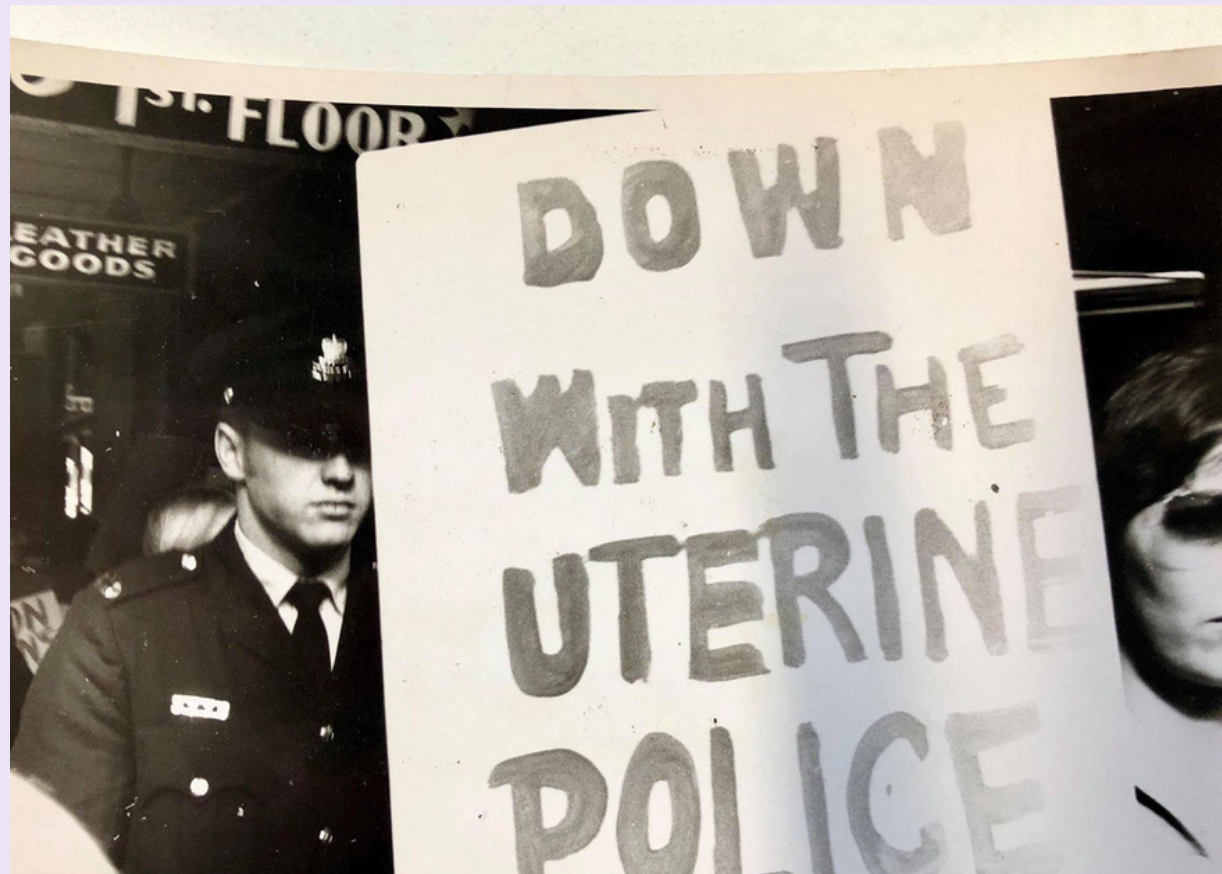
1970s



סמך 197



1970s



1970s



1970s

<u>Nov 78</u>	LUSHER motion introduced in Fed parlt to remove all benefits for abortion. WAAC questions parliamentarians & sends petitions
<u>20 Dec 78</u>	Darling St Women's Health Centre opens
<u>Feb/march 79</u>	Right to Choose no10
<u>march 31, 79</u>	International Day of Abortion Action - WAAC demo
<u>May 79</u>	Bulletin publishes Morgan Gallup Poll showing 13% in favour of legal abortion.
<u>79 (when?)</u>	Lusher motion defeated.
<u>mid 79</u>	SWr leave WAAC
<u>Aug 79</u>	beginning of Qld Bill campaign
<u>20th Oct 79</u>	WAAC Sydney Demo against Right to Life Week of the unborn Child

DON'T
AGONISE
ORGANISE
L.W.D. - 1979



1970s



Right to Choose Coalition

Right to Choose Coalition
GPO Box 3564
Sydney 2001

Dear

We write to ask your assistance in the formation of an organised campaign to protect and extend the right of women and men to control their fertility.

Over the past year, this right has been under constant threat following renewed attacks by such groups as the Festival of Light, Right to Life and various small fanatical groups. Anti-choice groups and individuals have sought to physically prevent women's access to legally established medical services providing abortions by:

- abusing and harassing clients and staff of several clinics providing abortions,
- persecuting medical practitioners working in the clinics,
- vandalising and setting fire to clinics.

Steps have also been taken to challenge the present legality of abortion and return us to the dark age of illegal backyarders, who have cost so many women's lives and health. At Federal level the government has been strongly lobbied to eliminate government funding for abortions. Such changes would virtually place a 'means test' on women's ability to obtain abortions and control their fertility.

At State level, the Minister for Youth and Community Services, Mr. Stewart, recently sought to prevent a State ward from obtaining an abortion and was only prevented from doing so by a ruling from the Supreme Court. It now appears certain that within the next six months there will be an attempt by the Rev. F. Nile or others to introduce legislation completely outlawing abortion in NSW. The success of such legislation would, in effect, mean that the religious beliefs of a small minority would be imposed by law on all, thereby directly contravening the basis of our democratic, secular society.

The anti-choice forces are a minority. However they are vocal, active, well organised and have considerable resources. They claim to represent the Christian view and by importing overseas fundamentalists, such as Jerry Falwell suggest an international status for their views. Thus they appear to be larger and more representative than they actually are. In fact surveys have shown that over three quarters of Australian adults support, and less than 10% oppose, the legal availability of abortion services (Morgan Gallup Poll, May 1979 / Women's Weekly Survey, May 1980).

The Christian and other churches are also far from unanimous about abortion and only a minority of the religious community seeks the abolition of the legal abortion services now available.

If the wishes of the significant majority are to prevail we can no longer afford to be silent. It is for this reason that we have taken steps to bring together concerned groups and individuals to form a coalition, the aims of which are:

"To defend the right of women to choose if and when they will have children and to this end to defend and improve existing abortion and fertility control services and to extend access to appropriate information, counselling and medical services.

The coalition supports the repeal of all sections of the Crimes Act relevant to abortion so that abortion be treated like all medical or surgical procedures. We therefore would not approve any reform legislation or amendments which limited women's access to abortion."

We urge you/your organisation to join us and to assist in whatever ways you can to protect and extend the right of women and men to control their fertility.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Healy
Patricia Healy,

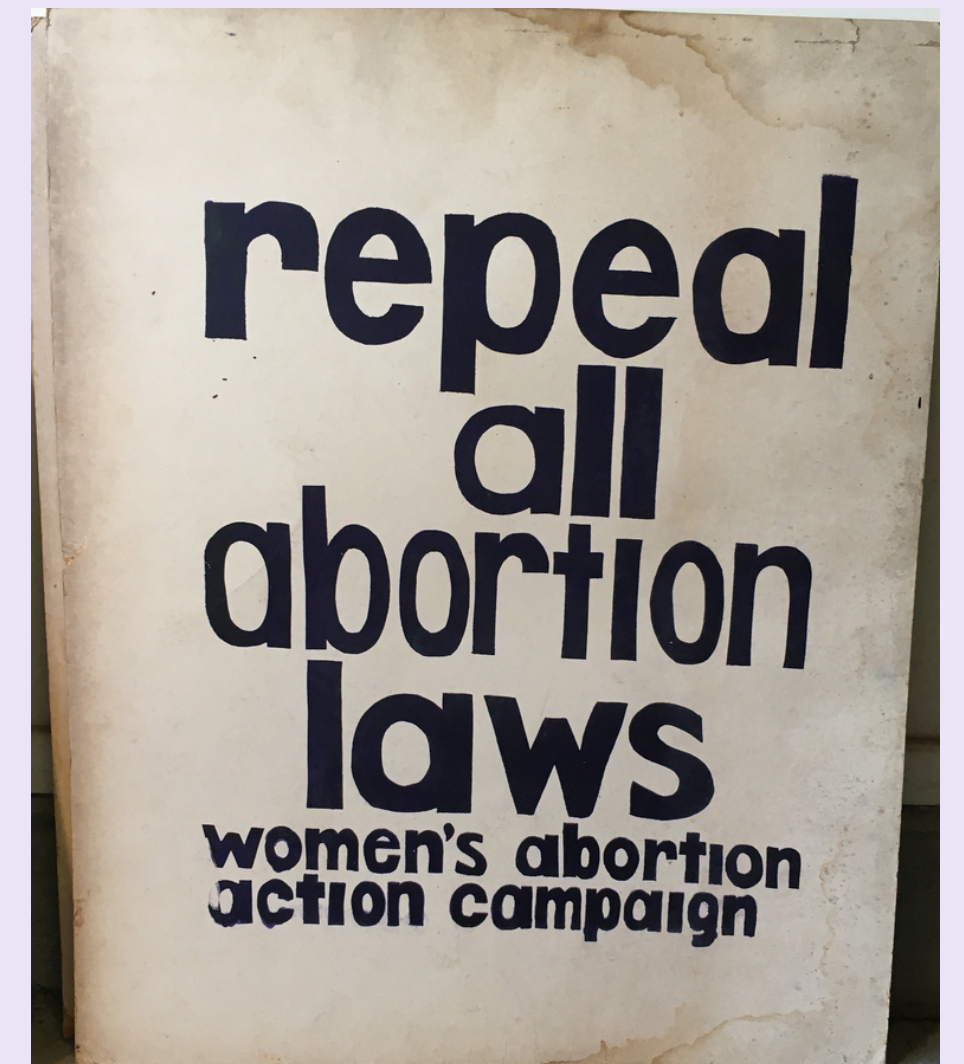
Jeanne Rudd

Jeanne Rudd,
on behalf of the Right to Choose Coalition.

1970s



1970s



1970s

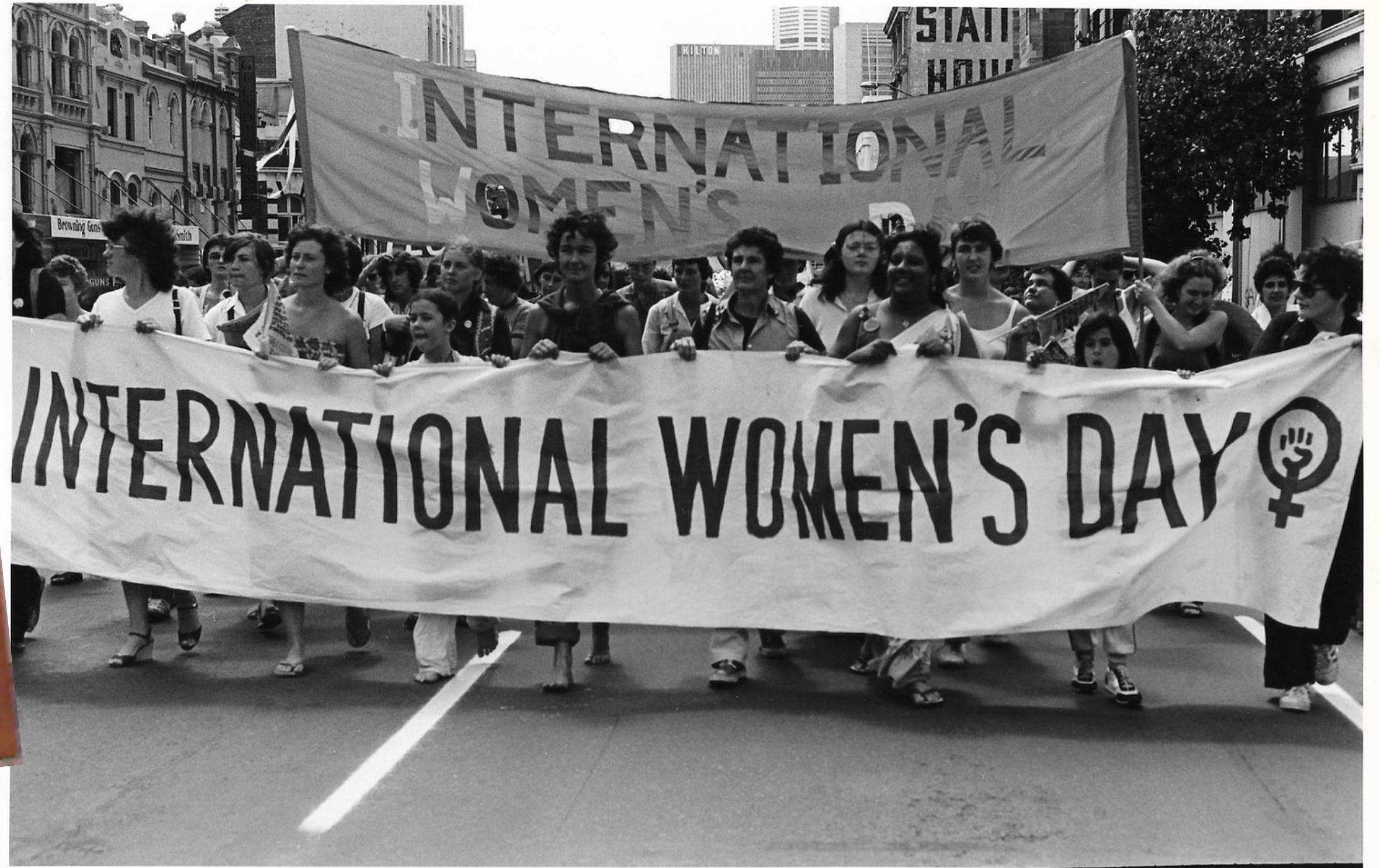


SYDNEY — The Powell St Clinic (Bessie Smyth Foundation) in Homebush in Sydney's west opened in 1977 to provide a service to women that was different, and still is, from many other abortion services.

*Green Left Weekly,
27th May, 1998*

1970s

drop the
charges
defend the
liverpool
clinic
WOMEN'S ABORTION
ACTION CAMPAIGN



1970s

THE DECEPTIVE CONTRACEPTIVE

Depo-Provera is an injectable contraceptive that, like the Pill, is a synthetic hormone, in this case progesterone. It acts over a number of months and mainly works by preventing ovulation.

KNOWN EFFECTS

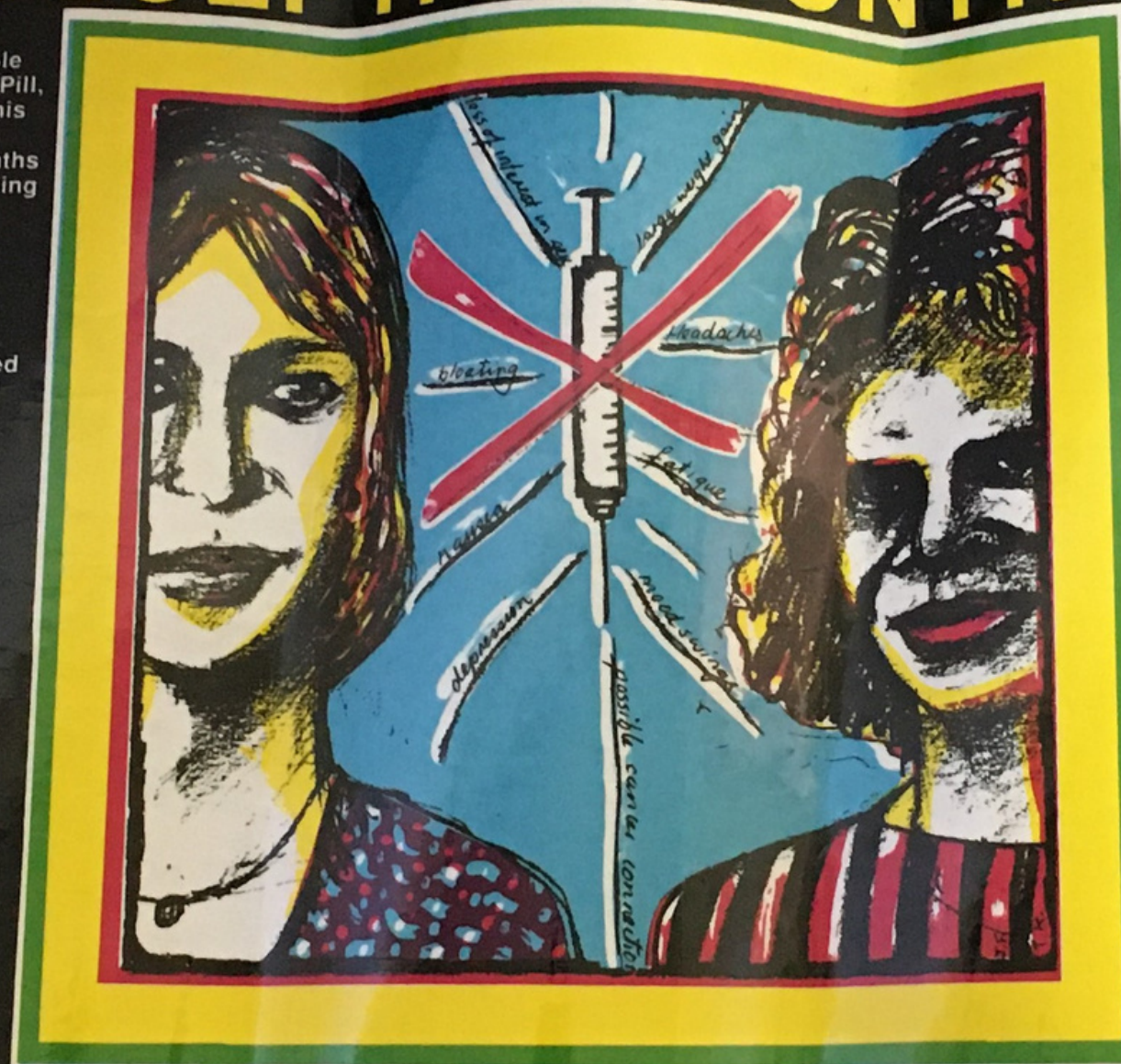
- women stop having periods
- some women have prolonged or unpredictable bleeding
- loss of interest in sex
- large weight gain
- delay in return of fertility
- depression, headaches, bloating

UNKNOWN EFFECTS

World Health Organisation studies suggest an increased risk of cervical cancer. Also under investigation is the development of infants breast-fed by mothers using Depo.

IRREVERSIBLE

There is no known antidote to Depo, so any effects will last up to 3 months and in some cases up to 5 years after one injection.

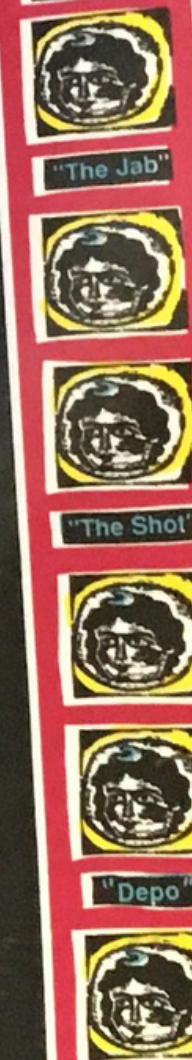


Your doctors may say that Depo is very easy to use and has few side effects. The problem is that you can't be sure until you've tried it. This may mean you'll be stuck with the symptoms until they wear off. Depo Provera is the contraceptive over which YOU have least control. Depo is a very convenient drug for the busy doctor and health worker. It can be given with little or no explanation apart from "Come back in 3 months for another injection"

There are women in Australia receiving Depo in this way, particularly:

- women in mental institutions;
- women who are developmentally disabled;
- migrant women who speak very little English.
- Aboriginal women in rural and city areas.
- women who are considered 'unwilling' or 'unable' to use any other contraceptive.

Given what is known - or rather what is NOT known - about this experimental drug, we, the Anti-Depo Campaign, cannot recommend its use and we call for the removal of it from the market.



BE AWARE

DEPO-PROVERA

BE



WEDS September, 1988

PRODUCED BY THE ANTI-DEPO CAMPAIGN, P.O. BOX E233, ST JAMES, NSW 2000.

oct 79

Right to Choose No 19

march 80

Right to Choose No 20 - WAAC joins anti Depo provera campaign

may 80

Qld bill defeated

oct 80

WAAC surveys candidates in FED election.

25 & 26 Oct 80

WAAC national activists workshop Sydney

Summer 80/81

Right to Choose No 21 New magazine format

1970s



**Photos on this
page feature
and courtesy of:
Jeanne Rudd,
feminist, WAAC
activist**



**Women's
Abortion
Action
Campaign**

