

## Position Statement

### Reproductive Health and Reproductive Technology

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*FPWA supports all people having accurate information around managing fertility to help them achieve or avoid pregnancy.*

#### Contraception

FPWA supports increased access to safe, effective and affordable contraception for men and women of all ages. This includes advocating for all contraceptive methods to be subsidised through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, making them accessible to young people and those on low incomes.

FPWA acknowledges there is no 'one size fits all' approach for contraception and that people have different contraceptive requirements throughout their reproductive lifespan. Each method has advantages and disadvantages and factors such as effectiveness, cost and side effects influence personal choice (see emergency contraception position statement for more information).

FPWA welcomes research into new safe and effective contraceptive options.

#### Infertility

FPWA recognises that infertility is a significant problem for many men and women and that approaches to its prevention and treatment raise many medical, social, ethical, public health and legal issues.

FPWA supports the right of every woman (and her partner where appropriate) to make decisions about her own reproduction and use of appropriate and available technology.

FPWA also believes that further resources need to be allocated for research into the causes of infertility and for community education on these aspects. With the trend towards delaying child-bearing in Australia evidenced in the median age of mothers and fathers rising consistently over the past two decades<sup>1</sup>, women in particular need to be reminded about declining fertility levels and encouraged not to rely on new technology to assist them in achieving pregnancy.

As involuntary infertility can be extremely distressing, FPWA believes that those who are infertile should have access to adequate support, investigation, and safe and appropriate treatment, and that limitations to this access should not be based on criteria that are discriminatory or inequitable.

#### Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

FPWA acknowledges the value and place of safe and effective reproductive technology techniques in the management of infertility.

FPWA believes that those who are infertile should be assisted in fulfilling their desire to have children. However, in the provision of services to achieve this there should also be consideration of the welfare and interests of any person to be born as a result of treatment, including their right to information about their genetic origins, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> ABS Yearbook 2006

consideration of equity, welfare and general standards prevailing in the community. FPWA believes there should be careful consideration of the wider social and ethical ramifications of ART, such as in the application of genetic testing of embryos and sex selection.

FPWA recognises that there is a need for dissemination of objective information on infertility, its treatment and its prevention, in order to promote informed public debate and policy making, and informed decision making by infertile people as to their own best care. This information should include:

- ◆ Alternatives to treatment, including childlessness as a valid choice
- ◆ Different types of available treatment, including treatments other than in vitro fertilisation (IVF)
- ◆ The short and long term outcomes and risks associated with the treatments, for both the person being treated and any child likely to be born
- ◆ Any limitations to the available information owing to the innovative nature of many of the procedures being offered
- ◆ The regulation by law of the assisted reproductive technologies in WA

People considering undertaking ART should also be informed of support/counselling services and provided with a referral where appropriate. FPWA believes that further resources need to be allocated to provide such services, other than in clinics that carry out ART, in order to encourage more objective decision making by those who are infertile.

### **Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs)**

Many STIs are easily treated if diagnosed early on, but can have serious consequences if left untreated, including infertility. FPWA encourages anyone who has unprotected sex in the past to get tested by a health professional.

FPWA welcomes research into the sexual health field, in particular around STI treatment and prevention.

### **Surrogacy**

Legislation in this area is currently changing and that while surrogacy may eventually be legal in WA, FPWA supports the idea of altruistic rather than commercial surrogacy. The Reproductive Technology Council is the leading WA body in this area, and FPWA supports any recommendations made by them regarding surrogacy (including the proposal that some non-commercial surrogacy arrangements be allowed to go ahead).