



Australian Parliamentary Group
on Population and Development


CONTACT

Our Secretariat is funded by the United Nations Population Fund and hosted by Family Planning Australia, a civil society organisation with almost a century of experience in sexual and reproductive health in Australia and beyond.

Contact the Secretariat for more information, to join the APGPD or be added to the mailing list:

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An invitation to Members of Parliament and Senators to join



Why join the APGPD?

The Australian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (APGPD) is a cross-party group of Members of Parliament and Senators committed to advocating for sexual and reproductive health, the rights of women, and sustainable development in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

It was formed in 1995 as an outcome of the landmark 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which recognised that gender equality and the empowerment of women are global priorities that are integral to eradicating poverty.

Lisa Chesters MP and Senator Mehreen Faruqi are the current co-chairs of the APGPD for the 47th Parliament.

The APGPD is connected to a global network of parliamentary groups on population and development that similarly connect parliamentarians across party lines and country borders.

Australia currently holds a Vice-Chair position with the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. Members of the APGPD are encouraged to also become a member of the Global Parliamentary Alliance.

What we do

- Champion sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and women's empowerment using evidence-based policies and legislation on sexual and reproductive health care policies, practices and services
- Work collaboratively on issues of shared interest with parliamentarians in our domestic and global networks
- Represent Australia at international conferences and workshops on these issues
- Engage with experts, policy makers and front-line service providers from across the international development sector, Australian civil society and national parliaments
- Connect with parliamentarians across Australia and the world to promote good policy and practice



Impact

The APGPD is arguably one of Australia's most effective parliamentary friendship groups. Over the years, it has proven to be an important forum for Members of Parliament and Senators to come together across party lines to discuss and act on issues of both domestic and international importance with respect to sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2012, the group was recognised with a human rights award.

One of its most notable successes was in 2006, when a group of four women Senators from four different parties co-sponsored a bill to facilitate access to RU486, the 'abortion drug', which was not available in Australia at the time. The four Senators involved were Claire Moore (Labor), Lyn Allison (Australian Democrats), Judith Troeth (Liberals) and Fiona Nash (Nationals). Only Senator Nash was not a member of the APGPD.

This coming together was unprecedented in 105-years of the Australian parliament, given cross-party sponsorship of legislation is very rare. As Marian Sawer writes, "for all the Senators involved in the RU486 Bill... it was the networking and trust created through the Parliamentary Group that paved the way for further cross-party work."¹

In 2007, the APGPD was also instrumental in lifting the ban on certain contraceptives and abortion in Australia's aid program. At the time, Australia's restrictions on aid had echoes of the United States' infamous 'Global Gag Rule', which was rescinded again by President Biden as one of his first actions in office.

In 2012, the APGPD was recognised with the Sir Ron Wilson Human Rights Award for its leadership, an "acknowledgement of the dedication of the time and energy" the group had put in to work in the international arena since its establishment after the ICPD. The award is presented annually to an individual or organisation that has made an outstanding contribution to advancing human rights.

The ICPD & Sustainable Development Goals

As stated at the ICPD and advocated by the APGPD, access to reproductive health services is not only a need but a right, and key to women's empowerment and communities' sustainable development. In addition, we are committed to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals' ambition to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people and communities around the world, and we recognise that gender issues intersect with all of these goals.



¹ Sawer, M. (2012). What makes the substantive representation of women possible in a Westminster parliament? The story of RU486 in Australia. *International Political Science Review*, 33(3), 320-335.