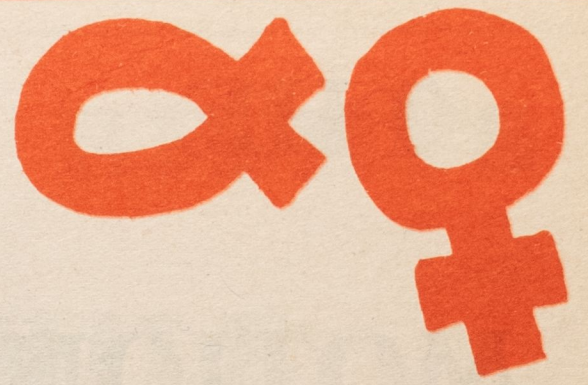


Abortion is a woman's

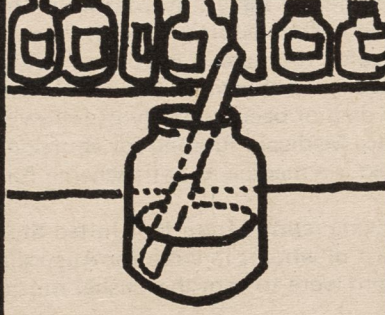
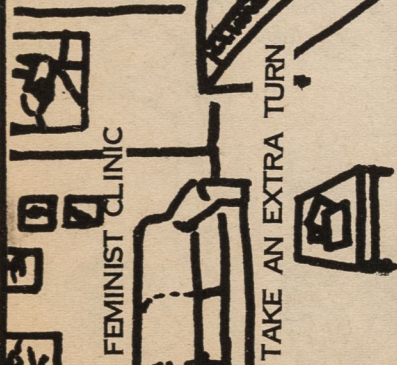
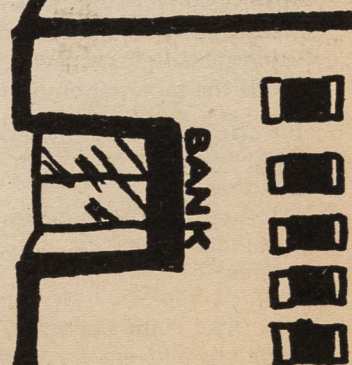

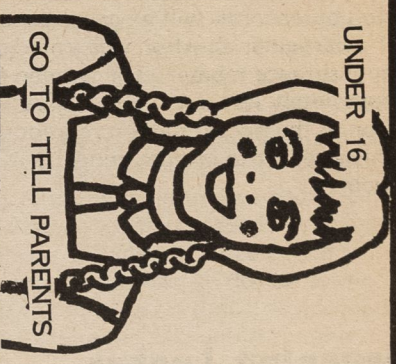

Right to Choose



Registered for posting as a publication Category B.

APRIL 1979

EXTRA

<p>START</p>	<p>CONTRACEPTION FAILS</p>	 <p>POSITIVE PREGNANCY TEST</p>	<p>TAKE STATE CARD</p>	<p>ABORT!</p>
 <p>FEMINIST CLINIC TAKE AN EXTRA TURN</p>	<p>THE ABORTION GAME</p> <p>› AUSTRALASIAN EDITION ‹</p>			 <p>BANK</p>
<p>LIVE IN COUNTRY GO TO TRAVEL</p>				<p>SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS TAKE EXTRA TURN</p>
 <p>TELL PARENTS, MISS ONE TURN</p>				 <p>UNDER 16 GO TO TELL PARENTS</p>
<p>RIGHT TO LIFE PICKET AT CLINIC PANIC AGAIN</p>	<p>YOUR HEALTH FUND WON'T PAY - GO TO BANK</p>	 <p>TRAVEL MISS ONE TURN</p>	<p>PREGNANCY OVER 12 WEEKS MISS TWO TURNS</p>	<p>FALSE ALARM THIS TIME. RETURN TO START FOR NEXT ROUND</p>

<p>State Cards</p>	<p>SOUTH AUSTRALIA Abortion available in public hospitals - Reform Law</p>	<p>VICTORIA Abortion available in clinics - Menhennitt ruling</p>	<p>NEW SOUTH WALES Abortion available in clinics - Levine ruling</p>	<p>WESTERN AUSTRALIA Abortion available</p>
<p>ACT & NORTHERN TERRITORY A few abortions in public hospitals - go to travel</p>	<p>QUEENSLAND No abortion - go to travel</p>	<p>NEW ZEALAND See 4 doctors, get approval - Free abortion on National Health - Return to Start</p>	<p>NEW ZEALAND No approval - go to bank then travel</p>	<p>TASMANIA Very few abortions available, go to travel.</p>

THE LUSHER

MOTION

THE LUSHER MOTION – WHAT IS IT REALLY ABOUT?

Stephen Lusher, the National Country Party member from Hume, NSW has put on notice in Federal Parliament a motion which states:

"That this house requests the government to introduce legislation which will provide that:-

(A) Medical benefits shall not be provided by the Commonwealth for the termination of pregnancy unless the termination was performed to prevent the imminent death of the mother from a physical pathological condition.

(B) Where medical expenses are incurred in respect of a medical service specified in the medical benefits schedule which could include the termination of pregnancy, the doctor who performed the service shall be required to certify to the health insurance commission that—

(1) that the operation was not performed to terminate a pregnancy but for a stated, other purpose,

OR,

(11) that, if the operation was performed to terminate a pregnancy, it was carried out in order to prevent the imminent death of the mother from a specified physical pathological condition."

In ordinary words this means that no medical benefits will be paid for any abortion that is not performed to prevent the immediate death of the pregnant women. Also any doctor who performs any medical procedure that might also include an abortion must certify that the women was not pregnant before she can claim medical benefits. Cancer surgery is included here.

This is a grave threat to the rights of all women in Australia. It means that politicians and health commission bureaucrats will be given the authority to decide if a particular abortion was a medical procedure deserving an insurance rebate. The woman and her doctor are completely left out. The A.M.A. opposes this intervention in the doctor-patient relationship. W.A.A.C. opposes this attempt to impose minority moral values on all women.

Opposing Lusher



Right to Choose April 1979 p. 2.

CONSEQUENCES

If the motion passes and then the government introduced and passed a bill to make it law, what would happen to women? Some women would not be able to afford to pay for a safe medical abortion, now costing between \$100-\$300. Some would have babies they would rather not have, others would turn to backyard abortionists who would provide a cheap, dangerous abortion.

This is not merely a guess at what would happen. In New Zealand where abortion is now illegal women have been treated for massive infections following self-induced or backyard abortions. In the United States women have died or been seriously ill following backyard abortions since Medicaid funding for abortion was cut off. Medicaid is a medical benefit scheme for poor people

The following reports from the United States provide a grim forecast of what is in store for Australian women if the government were to turn the Lusher motion into law.

Rosie Jimenez is the one reported death most directly linked to the cutoff of federal funds for abortion, she is not the only woman who has suffered. Numerous reports of serious injury and even death are beginning to be received by a number of organisations and individuals. In some cases, the link to the cutoff is not clear: the victims have been marginally poor and therefore not eligible for Medicaid; or they've been women who are eligible and live in states where funding has continued, but have been given misleading information from uninformed or hostile officials.

A young black mother in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, died after a friend inserted numerous Q-tips into the woman's cervix in an attempt to induce an abortion. The woman was desperate; she had recently lost her job and was the sole support of her child. Louisiana has never provided public assistance for abortions and with the passage of the Hyde Amendment, all hope for legally forcing the state to do so ended.

Two deaths from illegal abortions were reported to the New York City Department of Health from mid-August to mid-September in 1978. These are the first reported deaths from illegal abortions in New York City since 1973. As we went to press, no further details were available. The city is still investigating these deaths. While the city and New York State continue to provide Medicaid funds for abortion, many women on public assistance are unaware of this coverage because of the widespread publicity given to the federal cutoff.

On February 2, 1978, a 24-year-old black woman sought and obtained an illegal abortion in Columbia, South Carolina. She was a Medicaid recipient and the mother of a seven-year-old daughter. She first sought a legal abortion at a private clinic in Columbia, but was told that she was more than 12 weeks pregnant and that a second trimester abortion would cost her \$300 to \$550 – Medicaid would not pay for it.

The illegal abortionist, an elderly woman, packed her vagina with gauze. The abortion was done in a darkened bedroom; the instruments were not washed or sterilised. Within four days of the abortion the woman was admitted to the hospital with heavy bleeding and a high temperature.

A hysterectomy was performed. The woman is now undergoing psychiatric treatment for severe depression resulting from the realisation that she is sterile. (Reprinted from Ms, January, 1979.)

'It's all right because they're sincere'



Lusher himself knows this is true and does not care. He told Caroline Jones on 2FC's 'City Extra' that he knew the motion would not stop abortion. He went even further in December 1978 and told Clancy of the 'National Times' (December 9, 1978): "If you can afford to send your kids to Kings (school), you can; if you can't, you can't. There will always be people who have more advantages than others. I don't think you will ever get away from that." Lusher is willing to accept safe abortions for the rich, but not for the poor. The Lusher motion is thus yet another in the long series of attacks on working class people in Australia.

WHAT HAPPENS IN PARLIAMENT

Lusher has presented a private member's motion to the House of Representatives. Only if it is passed will there be pressure for the government to draft a bill to make the intent of the motion law. If such a bill is drafted it must be debated in both the House and Senate. If the motion is defeated we can hope that we have heard the end of it, at least for a while. The Right to Life is very persistent, however.

Members of the House will have a free or 'conscience' vote on the motion rather than voting on party lines. That means they will express their own opinions on the matter, not the will of their electorate. Les McMahon, ALP, wrote to WAAC late last year:

"As the Member of the electorate of Sydney, I will certainly always vote against abortion, I have in the past and will continue to strongly oppose any move to legalise abortion in Australia."

In spite of this obvious failure to consider either the needs or desires of the electorate the conscience vote remains ALP policy for 'moral' issues.

A 'conscience' vote can only record the opinions of politicians, yet we all must obey the laws they make. This is an obvious case of the personal views of a few middle-aged, wealthy men being required for the entire population. Of Course, not all politicians deny a woman's right to choose, but as long as the majority do we will be denied the control of our own bodies.

The Right to Life tries to justify this control of women by a few men in terms of the ideals of parliamentary democracy. In the most recent Right to Life Newsletter there are responses to the arguments against the Lusher motion most often put by politicians. One is:

"SOME FEDERAL POLITICIANS ARE SAYING:

Just because you disagree with some policies, you should not be able to prevent your taxes going towards the payment of those policies. For instance, pacifists who refuse to go to war still pay for defence; religious groups who do not believe in blood transfusions do not have the right to have their taxes withdrawn from payment of such procedures.

ABORTION RIGHTS

IN CHILE



In Chile in September 1976, after three years of military dictatorship, Pinochet introduced the following legal measure: "The law protects the life of the foetus about to be born". But in Chile today there is no "protection of life" for men, women or children. In what follows, we summarise the situation in Chile today, the situation of Chilean women, and the problem of abortion.

Abortion in Chile has always been illegal. The legislation that exists is included in the Civil Code and dates from the last century. Women are only allowed "therapeutic" abortion, in a state hospital, in two cases: if they have German measles in the first three months of pregnancy, or the pregnancy puts the woman's life in danger (cardiac and renal illnesses, for example). In both these cases, women have to present certificates signed by three specialists. Many specialists deny their consent to force women into the more profitable, illegal market of the private clinics. In three years of working in a state hospital I only knew of one woman who had a legal abortion, and she was the wife of a police officer.

Therapeutic abortion is a legal 'let-out' which exists only to provide middle class women with abortion when they need it. Legal abortion is not a reality for the working classes who could never, in any case, pay the medical fees. In addition, they have no access to contraceptives, nor money to pay for hospital appointments. The reality for working class women is to be driven to backstreet abortionists, to the unscrupulous men and women who have no medical, technical nor hospital training and who work in filthy conditions. This can mean three years or more in prison for the woman and for the person who carried out the abortion. Because of Chile's corrupt legal system, abortionists are able to bribe the police and retain their liberty, which most women cannot afford. Backstreet abortionists use rubber tubes, sticks, barbed wire, vegetable roots, and injections of various kinds. If a woman cannot afford an abortion like this, she herself will attempt to carry it out using household objects — hairpins, sticks. Scores of working class women arrive every day at the hospitals for post-abortion treatment, suffering from haemorrhages, serious infections, sometimes critically ill. Some die as a result.

In Chile, under Allende, there were many attempts to make abortion legal and to improve women's situation. The left tried to put forward and develop a more realistic attitude towards women's problems, but in practice tried to stamp out backstreet abortions without creating the facilities for a legal alternative. To try to stop these attempts to improve women's situation, the Chilean middle class parties and the Catholic Church, using moralistic arguments, united in their attempts to prevent abortion from becoming legalised. What they were really defending were the established and selfish interests of the middle class, ignoring the needs of working class women.

It is not only Chilean laws which prevent a woman from having the freedom of choice whether to have a child or not. The most important reason is the serious economic situation in which ordinary people in Chile today are forced to live. Families cannot feed any more children, nor can they feed those they already have. In many cases, the husband is unemployed, in prison or has disappeared; the wife, too, is unem-



ployed. If a woman can get work, it is under very bad conditions. In addition, there is no social security, those who are unemployed go hungry; Chilean women bear the burden of the home, and they cannot have children in healthy conditions. The economic situation also means that working people cannot afford any medical treatment. Sometimes desperation drives women to infanticide. I saw three incidents of infanticide among working women while I was a midwife.

The repression in Chile is brutal — the intelligence organisations arrest, kill and torture every day. Many hundreds of women have been raped during interrogation and have become pregnant. They have demanded the right to abortion and have been refused. While I was in prison a woman committed suicide after becoming pregnant through being raped six times. Under the counter revolutionary regime hundreds of women who were pregnant and who were working in the resistance have been arrested; they have been beaten in the stomach until they aborted; their children have been born in concentration camps; their births have been induced before the termination of pregnancy to pressurise the mother to talk; hundreds of women who today have 'disappeared' without anyone knowing where they are being held, and for whom the authorities deny all responsibility.

The Chilean secret police, the D.I.N.A. (Direccion de Inteligencia Nacional) since March-April 1976 has been detaining people without witnesses, kidnapping them in the street, taking them to secret torture houses, and torturing them to death. The mutilated body may be found afterwards (as in the case of the teacher Marta Ugarte, whose body was washed up on a beach). The authorities try to whitewash the murders as the result of 'passionate crimes' or 'car accidents'. Sometimes even the fingers of the corpses have been cut off to prevent identification; sometimes it is said that the 'disappeared' persons have left the country. In a well-known recent case, the Junta staged a publicity show and said that eight persons who had disappeared in December, 1976, had gone to Argentina. If anyone succeeds in surviving the torture, their fate is to be held in prison as a common criminal, accused of assaults, armed attacks and robberies. They are held without recognition of their status as political prisoners.

This is the reality in which Chilean women and the Chilean people are forced to live, a reality that differs little from that of other Latin American countries under the yoke of military rule — Argentine, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia and Ecuador. The real solution for the women of Chile lies deeper than the legal right to abortion. Because of the repressive situation a woman cannot protest, cannot organise to make her voice heard, democratic rights are prohibited, and unions and associations are banned. What the Chilean woman needs is to change the political, social and economic situation in Chile which will enable her, as a free person, and as a mother, to decide for herself her future children. It is for this reason that I, as a Chilean woman, denounce what is happening in Chile and throughout Latin America today.

We ask that international solidarity continue and increase. We demand the economic and political isolation of the military Junta. We ask for support for the struggle to obtain democratic rights, and for the fight of the Chilean people for a popular, democratic and revolutionary government which will enable the women of Chile to fight for their rights, one of which is the right to abortion.

A Chilean Midwife, now a refugee in Britain.

RIGHT TO LIFE REPLIES:

The defence of this country and blood transfusions are policies with which the majority of Australians agree, and quite rightly minority groups should pay for them by taxes, even if they are against such policies. The majority of Australians rejected abortion in the A.C.T. through their Federal Parliament in 1973 and 1977/78. The Federal Government by paying for abortion is capitulating to the wishes of the strident minority who want abortion."

As long as the conscience vote remains this answer is a lie. The people of Australia do not speak when there is a 'conscience' vote — only the members of parliament speak. Not even political parties speak during a conscience vote. For years the ALP women's conferences and Young Labor conferences have endorsed the repeal of abortion laws and end to the conscience vote which allows politicians to ignore the will of the majority. Nevertheless the male dominated State and Federal conferences of the ALP hang on to their patriarchal privilege and continue to consult their own consciences about the lives of women.

The major parties will have to be forced to recognise the right of women to decide about abortion, contraception and sterilisation. We will all have to continue the pressure for change. In Victoria the Food Preservers Union has served notice that it will oppose the conscience vote and support the woman's right to choose in the upcoming ALP state conference. This is an admirable step and we call on all trade unions to do the same. We also call on the ACTU to include the right to abortion along with the right to good childcare in its Working Women's Charter.

Women in the Liberal and Country Parties must remind their parties that not all Australian are wealthy businessmen, graziers or mining magnates. All women should be able to choose a medically safe abortion, not just those who can afford the doctor's bills. Women in churches must speak out so the Right to Life cannot claim the monopoly on Christian concern.

All of us must get together to gain control of our lives. The Lusher motion is a threat to take away what little control we now have. WOMEN UNITE — ABORTION IS OUR RIGHT'

STOP PRESS: 22 - 3 - 79

Lusher motion defeated when House of Representatives voted for Simon amendment to maintain status quo, 62 to 52.

Abortion is no Game

ABORTION REFERRALS and COUNSELLING

If you suspect you are pregnant, obtain a pregnancy test from a chemist or the Family Planning Association. Sometimes an early pregnancy test gives a false negative — that is it says you are not pregnant when in fact you are. Therefore if you do not have your period very soon after a negative pregnancy test, go and get another test and seek medical advice from a doctor or health clinic. Once your pregnancy is confirmed, seek help quickly, the earlier you have an abortion, the safer it is. There are Abortion Counselling and referral services in most states — ring them for help.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY — The Abortion Counselling Service is run by the Women's Centre Canberra, — 47-8070.

VICTORIA — The Family Planning Clinic in Melbourne 42-1414.

NEW SOUTH WALES — Control is a Women's Liberation referral and counselling service in Sydney — 231-2777.

NORTHERN TERRITORY — Ring the Rape Crisis Centre in Darwin — 21-2557.

QUEENSLAND — Children by Choice is a referral and counselling service - 371-5477.

QUEENSLAND CONTROL is a referral and counselling service run by Women's Liberation in Brisbane - 52-1444.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA — Women's Liberation runs a referral service in Adelaide — 223-1005.

TASMANIA — Hobart Abortion Information - 28-0509.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA — The Abortion Information Service (AIS) runs a referral service, Perth — 384-2425.

A counsellor will talk over your situation with you so that you can then decide what to do. If you decide to have an abortion, the counsellor will refer you to a clinic to suit your needs.

BIRTH CONTROL

- BIRTH CONTROL PILL (THE PILL)** works by suppressing ovulation. You must go to a doctor for a prescription and although it is statistically one of the safest methods of contraception, many women experience side effects which prevent them from using this method. Also, for some women the pill is dangerous.
- INTRA-UTERINE DEVICE (I.U.D.)** is a copper or plastic device which is inverted into the uterus. It makes it difficult for the egg to imbed itself into the lining of the uterus. Once it has been inserted by a doctor, it can usually be left in position for about two years.
- DIAPHRAM** made of soft rubber in the shape of a cup which fits over the cervix, preventing the sperm from entering the cervical canal. It must be placed in position before intercourse and must be used with spermicidal cream or jelly available from the chemist. Family Planning Clinics and doctors can fit a woman with a diaphragm and it should then be checked every year.
- CONDOM (RUBBER, PROPHYLACTIC, FRENCH LETTER)**
A sheath made of thin, strong latex rubber designed to fit over an erect penis to keep the semen from entering the woman's vagina. Used alone a good quality condom is 85%—95% effective depending on how effectively it is used. By combining condoms with a spermicidal foam, cream or jelly, they are much more effective. Available from Family Planning Clinics or chemists. It is not necessary to see a doctor.
- CHEMICAL METHODS (FOAM' JELLY, CREAMS ETC.)**
Not as effective as a diaphragm used with cream or jelly, or as effective as a condom. If it must be used alone, two full applicators should be inserted, as close to the time of intercourse as possible. Available from chemists.

6. WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal of the penis far away from the vagina just before ejaculation, so that the semen is deposited outside the vagina. Withdrawal is not very effective because the drops of fluid that come out of the penis right after it becomes erect can contain some sperm, at least enough to cause a pregnancy.

7. RHYTHM METHOD (SAFE PERIOD)

Intercourse is avoided at the time when a woman is most likely to become pregnant, that is, during ovulation. Not very effective for most people because a woman can become pregnant at any time during her cycle because she does not ovulate at the same time during each cycle.

POLITICAL ACTION

The Women's Abortion Action Campaign was set up in August, 1972 to fight for the repeal of all abortion laws and for freely available, safe contraceptives. From its inception WAAC has had as its aim the building of a women's campaign which would project through its activities the concept of abortion as a woman's right to choose. We saw the collective power of women as being the most important factor in winning repeal of abortion laws and in proving to the mass of women that abortion is not a subject of shame and secrecy but a fundamental right. Through demonstrations, public meetings and all kinds of educational material and activities we hoped to build up the consciousness and support of people on this issue.

It will be the collective efforts of women which will be decisive in forcing the repeal of the laws and not the good nature of politicians. Women have learnt over the years that patiently waiting for reform to be handed down has produced nothing. We have also learnt that it has been those campaigns which have reached out for the support and involvement of masses of women that have been successful.

We must remove all laws that make women criminals for exercising this control over their own bodies. Abortion and birth control clinics should be available in all communities for the service of all women. But repeal of the laws is the first step towards making abortion widely available for all. The principle behind our argument is that women have the right to determine what goes on inside our own bodies, a right to determine the course of our own lives. Winning this right will have far-reaching consequences as the opponents of the right to abortion, and women's rights in general, recognise. The denial of women's right to abortion is central to the oppression of women in a whole variety of ways. The fact that our childbearing functions are not under our complete control means that it is easier to be discriminated against in other areas of our lives. Gains in this sphere, however, will give impetus to women to fight for our rights in all areas.

If you are interested in working for a woman's right to choose contact a group in your area.

QUEENSLAND:
Brisbane — P.O. Box 440, West End, Brisbane, 4101.
University of Queensland — WAAC Club, c/o Clubs and Societies, U.Q.U., St. Lucia.

NEW SOUTH WALES:
Sydney — 62 Regent St., Chippendale, 2008.
U.N.S.W. — WAAC c/o Women's Collective Hut.

VICTORIA:
Melbourne — WAAC, 74 Moor St., Fitzroy.
Melbourne Uni.
Monash Uni.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:
Adelaide WAAC, 12 Eden St., Adelaide, 5000.

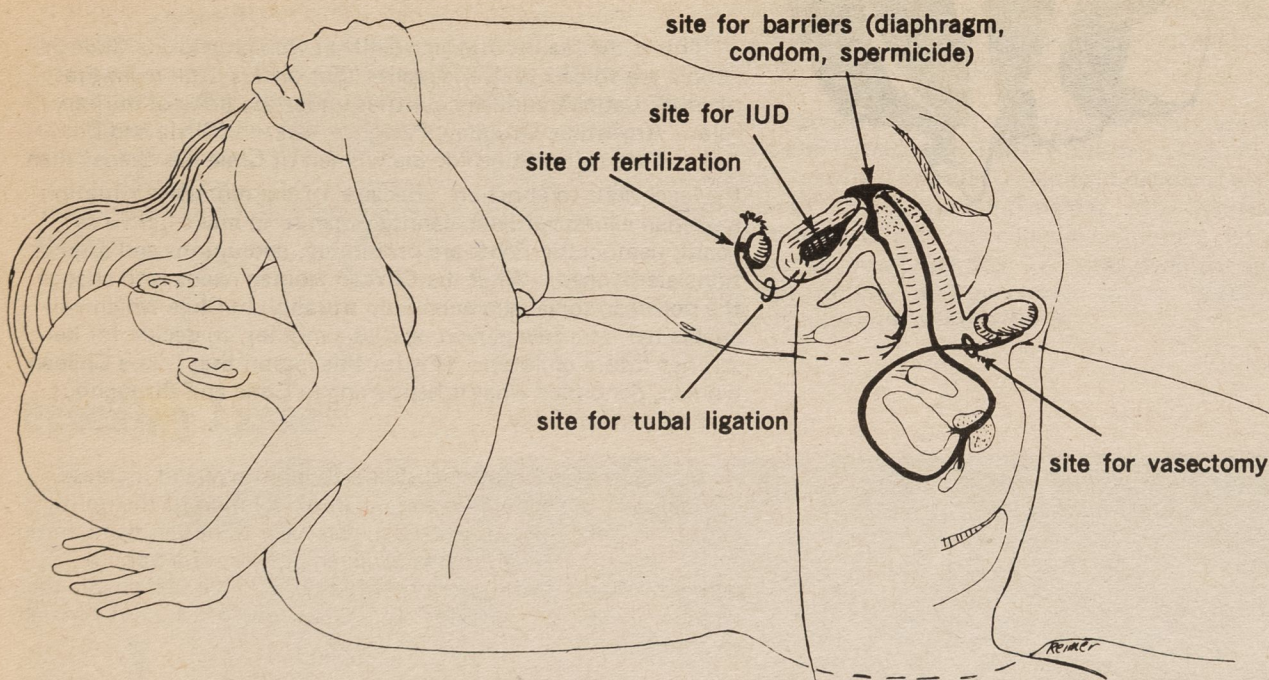
A.C.T.:
Women's Centre, 3 Lobelia St., O'Connor.
ANU Women's Group.

TASMANIA:
Hobart — Women's House, 126 Newtown Rd., Newtown.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:
Perth — Women's Liberation Centre, Padbury Place, Perth, 6000. ph. 325-7210

Other groups may already be on other campuses or in other cities. If not, why not start one?

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