



THE UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

From Crime to Care: the History of Abortion in Aotearoa New Zealand

Auckland Medical History Society
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Unwanted pregnancies



Māori solutions

Abortifacients



Squat over steaming leaves on hangi



Toetoe



Flax
(harakeke)



Whiteywood
(Mahoe)



Supplejack
(kareao)



Infusion of poroporo
(*Solanum laciniatum*)

Māori solutions

Deliberately breaking tapu: Miscarriage was punishment from the gods

- Eating food prepared for tohunga
- Eating food in sacred (tapu) place
- Passing cooked food over tohunga garment or resting place



British law in 1800s



ANNO VICESIMO QUARTO & VICESIMO QUINTO

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

1803 Offences Against the Person Act
illegal 'to procure the miscarriage of any
women then being quick with child'
incurred the death penalty, regardless of
whether the child was born alive or dead

1837 Illegal whether or not quickening
had occurred

1889, No. 17.]

Offences against the Person.

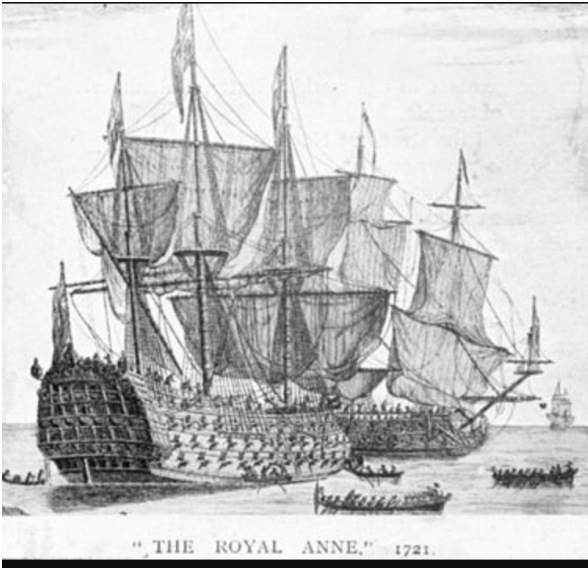
New Zealand.



1861 Woman herself liable if she
attempted to procure her own abortion -
maximum penalty life imprisonment

1889 NZ Offences Against the Person Act
replicated British statute

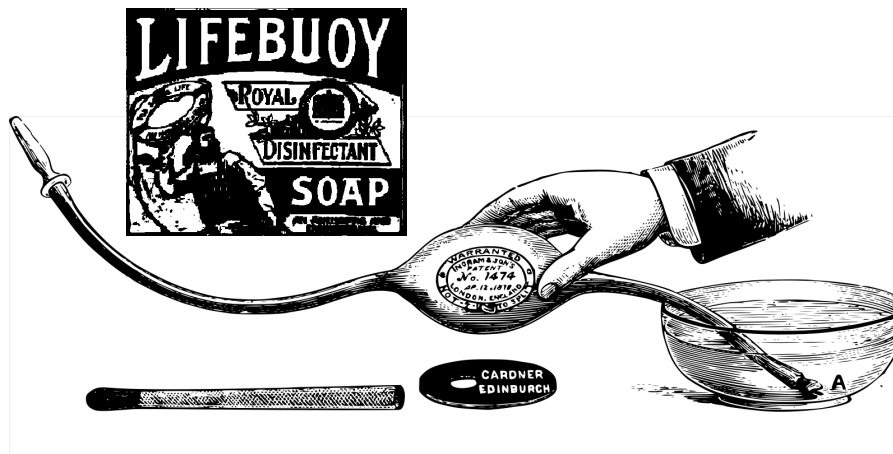
Imprisonment, execution, transportation across the seas



Victorian era



Penny royal, juniper,
ergot, quinine



Dr Doris Gordon (1890-1956)
Campaigned against contraception & abortion



Department of Health

1944

Abortion

'is a threat to the future of our nation'

ISSUED BY THE  DEPT. OF HEALTH



ABORTION!

She was told abortion was quite safe. The criminal abortionist who took her money said there was nothing to fear. But it wasn't safe—it never is. And this girl has paid with her health, and is in danger of paying with her life.

The latest figures indicate that in New Zealand there are 4,600 unlawful abortions a year. For every 100 births there are seven natural abortions (miscarriages) and thirteen induced abortions.

This is a threat to the future of our nation. Not only so, but terrible harm is done to the women concerned. One in every two ends up a chronic invalid. If drugs are used, untold damage can be done to liver and kidneys. Every woman who lends herself to criminal abortion risks sterility, sepsis and death.

All women—married and unmarried—must think of the dire consequences of unlawful abortion, when contemplating this crime against the nation and against themselves.

Men, too, have a great responsibility. Every man who condones this practice is agreeing to the taking of one human life and the probable maiming of another.

Except on medical grounds, abortion is a crime.
Let the new life be born!

FOR A HEALTHIER NATION

Post-War baby boom



1961 Amendment to NZ Crimes Act

Abortion < 20 weeks gestation lawful if
'person doing the act believed that continuance of pregnancy would result in serious danger... to life, or physical or mental health, of woman or girl'

'Termination committees' - senior gynaecologists plus co-opted others such as psychiatrists

SPUC

1970

Right to Life



Society for the **Protection**
of Unborn Children

ALRANZ

1970

Decision

between woman
& her doctor

ALRANZ

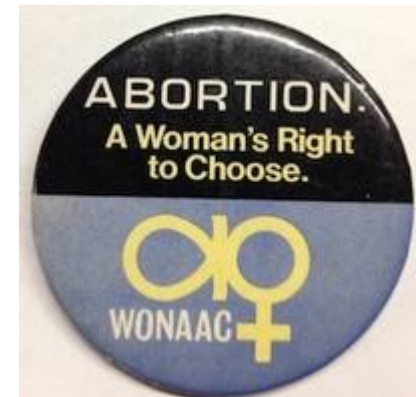
Abortion Law Reform Association New Zealand Inc.

WONAAC

1973

Woman's National
Abortion Action Coalition

Right to
Choose



Anti-abortion protest (SPUC)



Sir William Liley, Dr Diana Mason, Mrs Ruth Kirk, Most Rev R J Delargey

Pro-abortion protest (ALRANZ)

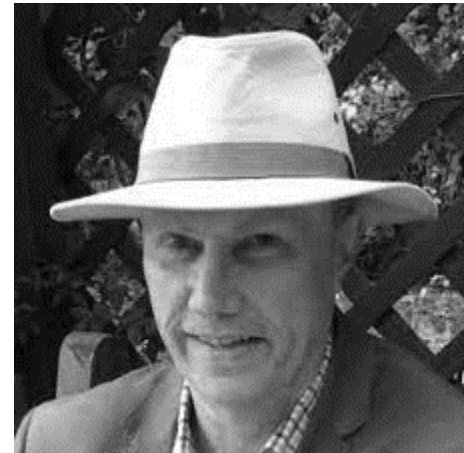


Auckland Medical Aid Trust 1974



Rex Hunton & Isabel Stanton

Anna Watson
Reg Clough
Gordon Hall

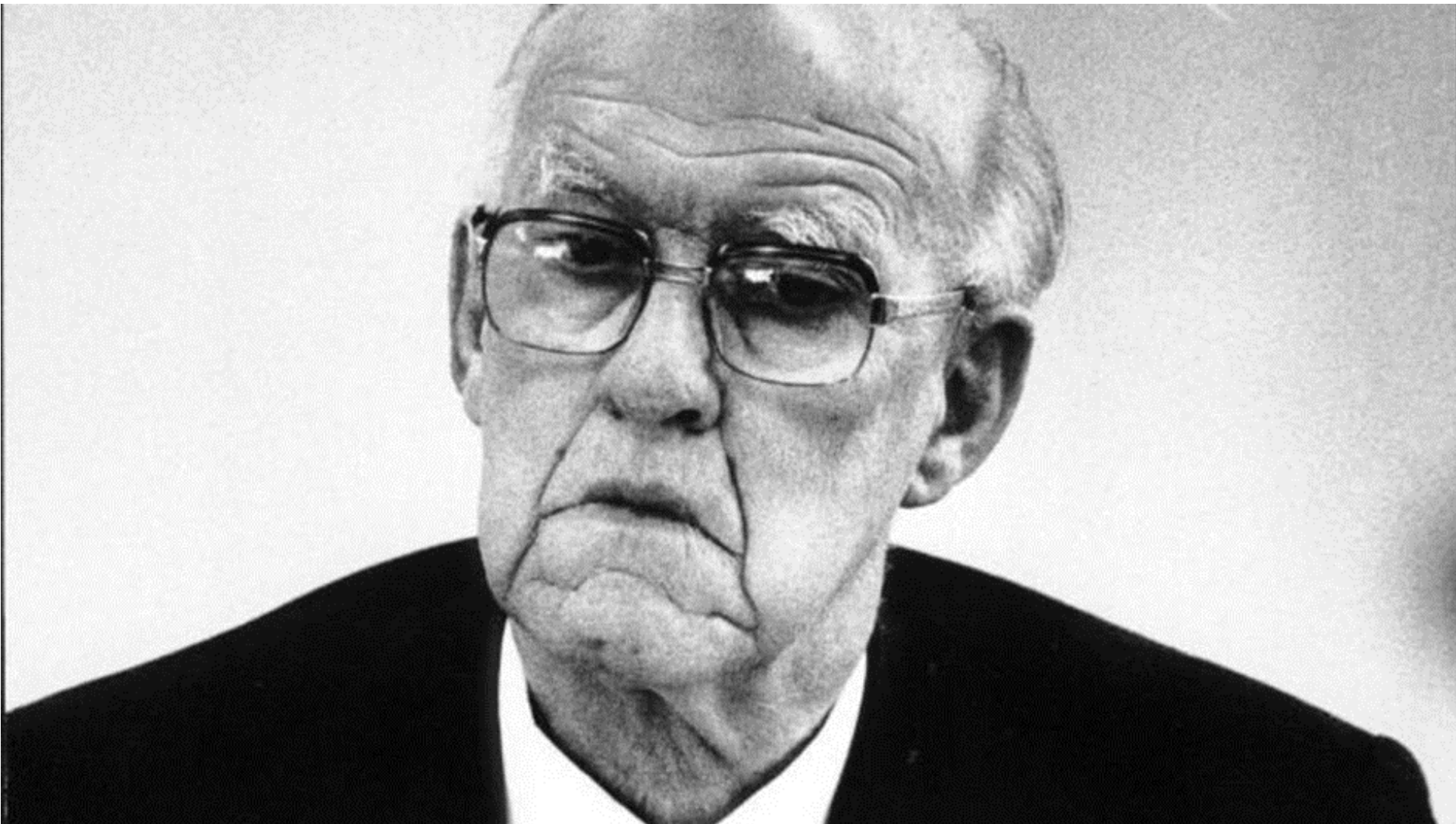


Wayne Facer

Auckland Medical Aid Centre (AMAC) 1974

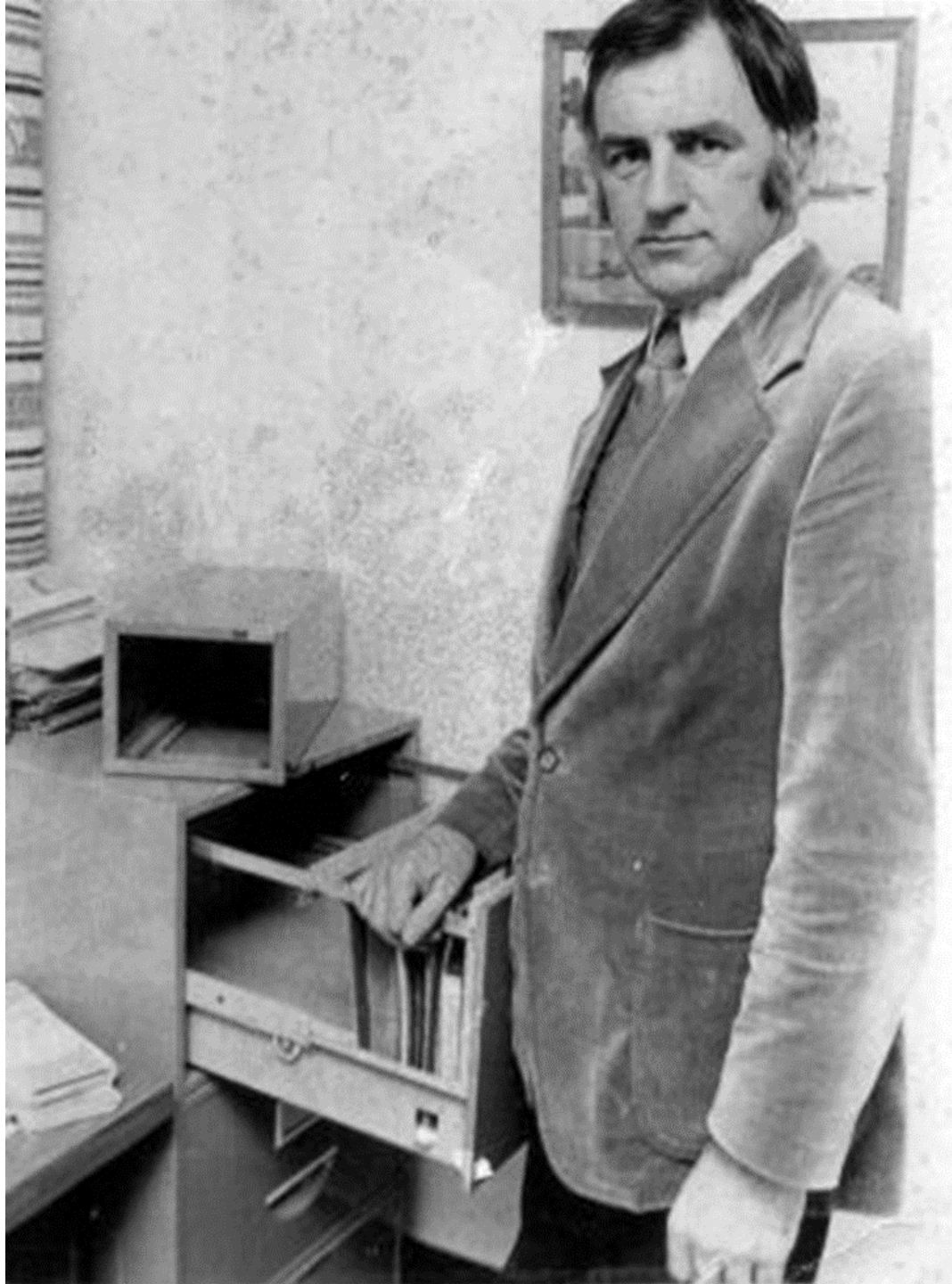


Herb Green



Police raid AMAC

Dec 1974



Jim Woolnough

Feb 1975 arrested

Aug 1975 1st trial (hung jury)

Nov 1975 2nd trial (acquitted)

Jul 1976 Crown Appeal
overturned



Wall's Bill 1974-1975



Protest AMAC 1970s



Aotea Hospital arson

1976



Royal Commission into Contraception, Sterilisation & Abortion 1975 to 1977



Dr M Matich, Barbara Thomson, Dame Dorothy Winstone, Sir Duncan McMullin (chair),
Denese Henare, M McGregor

Contraception, Sterilisation & Abortion Act 1977

Abortion Supervisory Committee



Dr Bruce Grieve, (Dame) Augusta Wallace,
24 Dr Heather Thomson

- Decided which institutions licensed to provide abortion
- Certifying consultants appointed & regulated
- Women needed referral from GP, see 2 certifying consultants then surgeon
- Socio-economic hardship, rape, incest, health of mother, carrying grossly abnormal baby born with serious handicaps, not grounds

REPEAL
petition
300,000
signatures
1978



Winifred Everitt, Brenda Cutress. Rev John Murray

1977 to 1979



Epsom Day Hospital 1978



Parkview Clinic Wellington 1980



Parkview protesters



Lyndhurst Christchurch 1985





Arson attacks

AMAC,
Lyndhurst

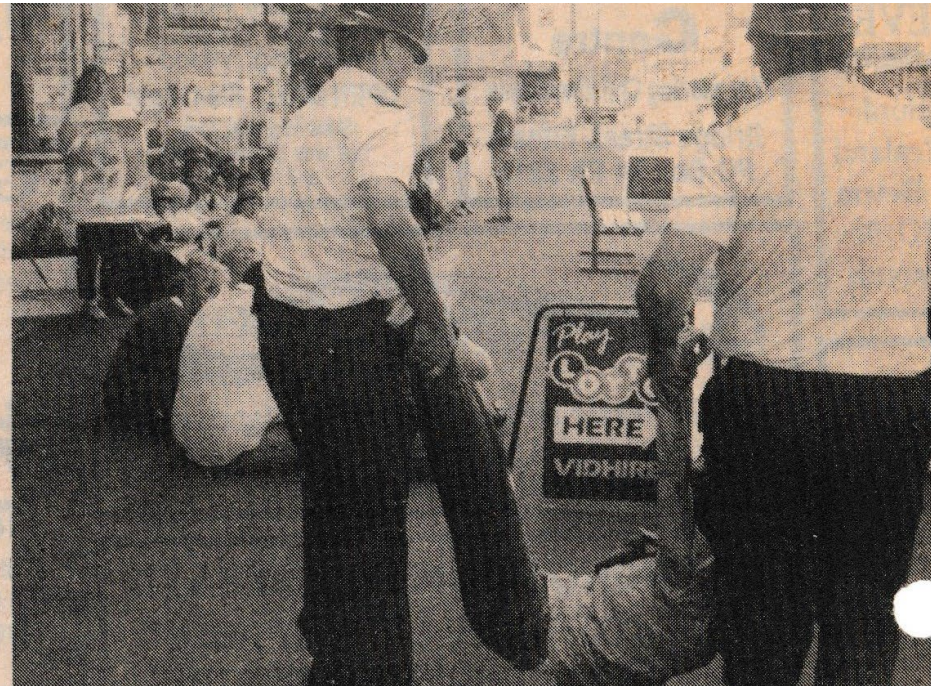


Operation Rescue

1988-1993

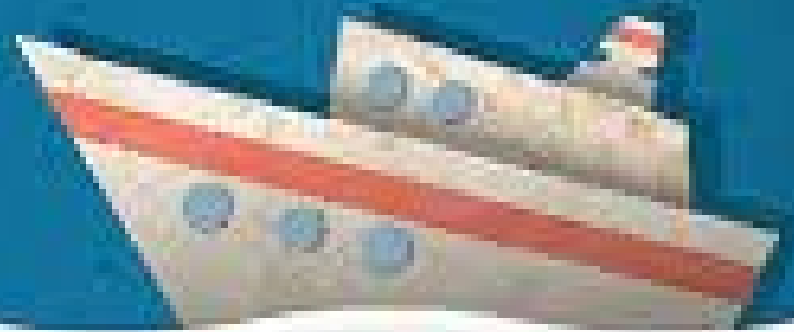
Parkview

AMAC



1980s to 2015

DONT ROCK THE BOAT



Slowly the tide turned



NZ election leaders' debate

2017



Booties outside Parliament 2018



37 Voice for Life memorial to 13,000+ abortions performed in NZ in 2017



Abortion Legislation Act 2020

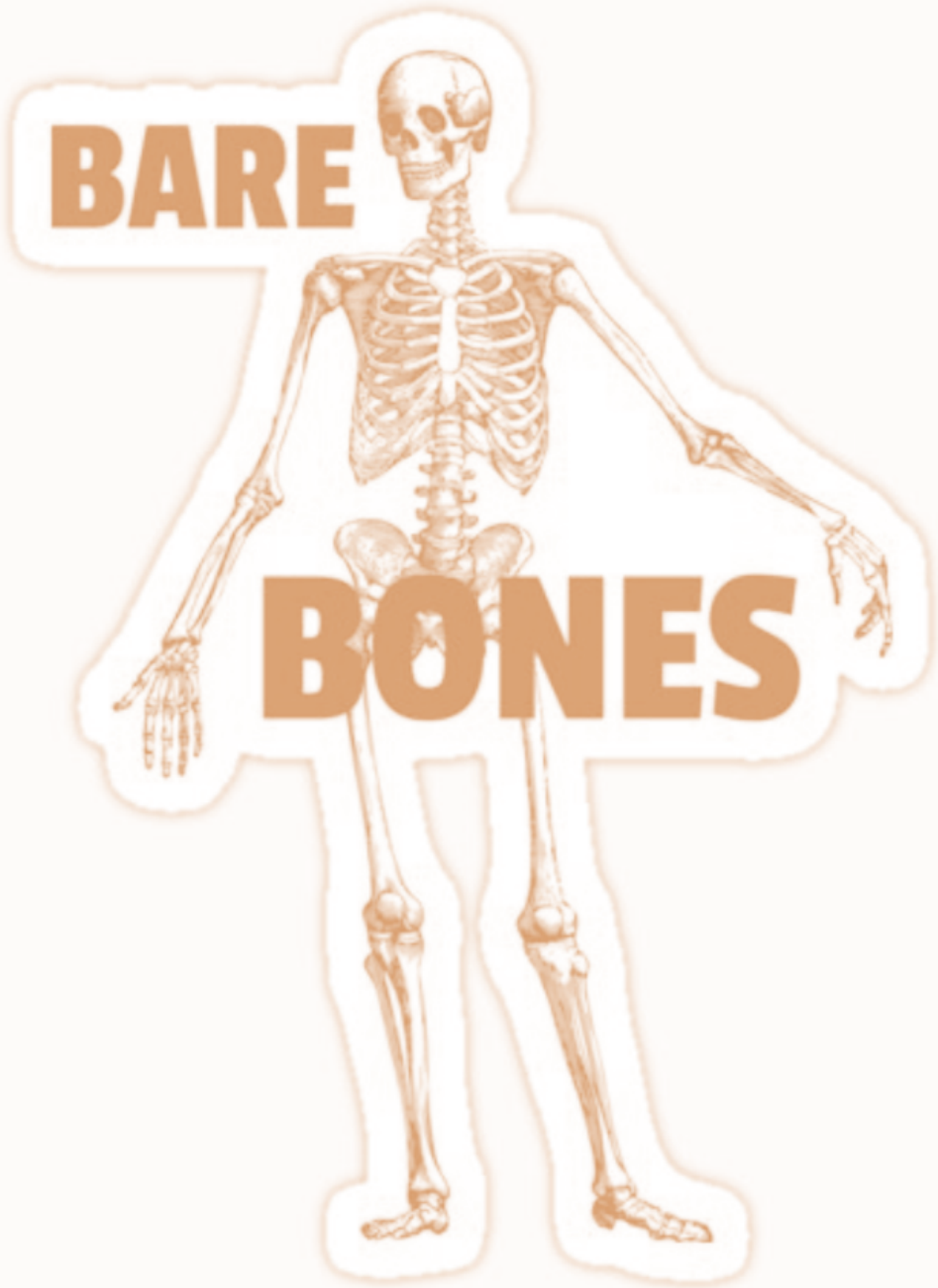
Public Act 2020 No 6

Date of assent 23 March 2020



Abortion is healthcare issue

- No longer under Crimes Act
- Women can freely request abortions (up to 20 weeks gestation) – no statutory test
- Any registered healthcare practitioner, within their required scope & skill set, can provide medical abortions, rather the process reliant on doctors
- No requirement for licenced premises



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