

# 57<sup>th</sup> Commission on Population and Development 2024



## Oral Statement: Family Planning NSW

*Commission theme: Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*

Excellencies, distinguished delegates and fellow advocates,

Family Planning New South Wales is honoured to deliver this statement to you here today. We are an Australian independent civil society organisation operating since 1926, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights through clinical services, health promotion, education and research. We use our experience as established service providers to advocate locally and internationally and are members of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and part of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

The International Conference on Population and Development and resulting Programme of Action called for a rights-based approach as essential to achieving just and sustainable development. As we assess the status of its implementation at this Commission, it is evident that advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality are critical components required to fully achieve the Program of Action and realise the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our organisation works with our state and national governments and partners in the health sector and civil society to increase access to health care and information, with a particular focus on priority populations, including young people, people with disability, Indigenous Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people living in rural and remote areas. For example, we have established outreach clinics in rural and remote parts of our state in Western New South Wales since 2018 in partnership with Aboriginal Medical Services and local health services and grown to become a major provider of potentially life saving cervical screening in the area, with almost half of our clients being people who were previously under-screened or never screened. These outreach clinics have also enabled us to address unmet need for contraception as we have become a major provider of long acting reversible contraceptives in these rural and remote areas.

We know that adolescent mothers and their babies are more likely to experience short-term perinatal complications and longer-term health and psychosocial adversities than older mothers. A statistical report released by our Research Centre demonstrated a steady reduction in the rate of adolescent fertility nationally and in our state of New South Wales over the decade from 2011 to 2020 - from 16 to 8 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 years. However, rates in some non-metropolitan areas, particularly those in remote locations, were up to three times as high as those in metropolitan areas. So although state and national figures show declining rates, the large disparity in rates across geographic areas show that work must continue to address inequities in access to health care, including effective and affordable contraception, and comprehensive sexuality education in order to reach targets in the Program of Action and SDGs for all young people.

While we celebrate progress over the past 30 years, it is evident that there is still much work to be done to achieve the targets of the ICPD Program of Action. Going forward, we will continue to work to ensure no one is left behind - in our own backyard, and supporting our neighbours in the Asia Pacific region as part of our inter-connected global community.