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LNP ignores community will; essentially endorses criminalising women and their doctors

The LNP's declaration that its members will all vote down a legislative package decriminalising abortion is a betrayal of Queenslanders, says community group Fair Agenda.

"This decision is a shocking failure by the LNP to represent the interests, and views, of Queenslanders," says Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda. "Polling done just a week ago shows that 76% of Queenslanders want abortion decriminalised. To close the door on this proposal is completely ignoring the clear will of the people on this issue."

"The LNP's decision essentially endorses continuing to criminalise women for their healthcare decisions. And means many Queenslanders will continue to be left without proper access to the full reproductive health care they desperately need."

"Mr Nicholls suggestion that the current system is working shows how completely out of touch he is on this issue - and a failure to understand the barriers to healthcare access that are distressing many of the LNP's constituents."

"This legislation offered a viable option for decriminalisation. The concerns raised by Mr Nicholls could easily have been addressed by simple amendments," says Kate Marsh, of Pro Choice Queensland.

"For a major party to collectively use their votes as a blocker on this issue is unprecedented in Australian politics and is totally contrary to what voters expect of their representatives," added Ms Marsh.

Polling released last week by Fair Agenda shows that 80% of LNP supporters in Queensland support a woman's legal right to choose; and 68% of LNP voters agree that Queensland women should have the same legal rights as their Victorian women, for whom abortion is legal up until 24 weeks of gestation. That's the core premise of the Bill that LNP MPs have just collectively committed to vote down.

Ms Marsh added: "The current system makes it near impossible to access terminations in many parts of the state. For women in places like Longreach, Charleville, and the West of the state - you would have to travel several hundred kilometers to access appropriate treatment."

"This decision means we will continue to see women – including those seeking this procedure because they are affected by sexual assault and domestic violence – continue to be considered criminals. And that they will be put through unnecessary trauma in seeking the medical support they desperately need."

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AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

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