

**28 February 2017**

**Delay on abortion law reform hurts women**

The referral of abortion decriminalisation to the Queensland Law Reform Commission is not the urgent change Queenslanders need - says community group Fair Agenda.

“This referral leaves the door ajar for decriminalisation - but only if we have a majority of pro-choice MPs in the next parliament willing to support it.”

“This means abortion has now become an election issue - and every single one of the 82% of Queenslanders who support a woman’s legal right to choose need to be making sure their MP does as well.”

“Queensland’s current laws are out-dated, and harmful to women. Change is urgently needed - and it could have been made tomorrow. Instead, after already having to wait 9 months for this vote; Queenslanders will now have to wait probably another year for a Law Reform Commission recommendation.”

Kate Marsh from Pro Choice Queensland added: “The LNP appear to be more interested in the interests of fringe anti-choice groups; than the 3 in 4 Queenslanders who support decriminalisation.”

Sian Tooker, a counsellor with Children by Choice, agrees: “While we’re waiting for the Commission to conclude their inquiry, nothing changes for Queensland women. That means we’ll keep hearing from women in desperate need who are being turned away from hospitals; and who are being forced to rely on the generosity of strangers to raise money to cover their medical costs - because they have to turn to private clinics.”

“The current system is failing women. Already this week we’ve had to support a woman who has been denied an abortion by her public hospital, despite having a potentially life-threatening pregnancy. These situations will continue to arise while we wait for a legislative resolution.”

“We know that 80% of LNP voters in Queensland think women should legally be able to make the decision to terminate their pregnancy, and that 60% of voters across the spectrum would be less likely to vote for an MP who votes to keep abortion should remain a crime,” says Kate Marsh.

“It’s time for pro-choice supporters of the LNP to let their party know that their decision to block this week’s decriminalisation package is completely unacceptable to the majority of their voters.”

**Media contact:** Renee Carr - Executive Director of Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976

**AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT**

- Renee Carr - Executive Director of Fair Agenda
- Kate Marsh, Pro Choice Queensland
- Sian Tooker, Counsellor Children by Choice

