



PRESS RELEASE
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Almost 100 QLD candidates have already taken pro-choice pledge

Decriminalising abortion is shaping up as a battleground issue this election with independent community campaigning group Fair Agenda revealing 98 QLD candidates have already signed up to its pro-choice candidate pledge.

This follows polling conducted earlier this year that shows that 76% of Queenslanders believe the abortion laws should be changed - and that most voters would be less likely to vote for those who want to keep treating abortion as a crime.¹

“Polling shows most Queenslanders believe a woman should have the right to choose. This pledge is about supporting pro-choice voters to cast an informed vote – so they know their candidate will represent them on this important issue,” said Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

“It’s great to see this many candidates have already pledged that they will stand up for Queenslanders to have the dignity of control over their body and future.

“Women and girls deserve to feel safe and in control of their own lives - and right now too many Queenslanders are denied that right, because there aren’t enough pro-choice champions in parliament to modernise the abortion laws. This election we can change that.”

In the pledge, launched publicly today, Fair Agenda has asked candidates to commit that, if elected, they will “*vote to remove abortion from the criminal code, and support laws to ensure all Queenslanders can safely and legally access full reproductive healthcare, without being harassed or intimidated.*”

Pro-Choice Queensland convenor and former Queensland Liberal Senator Sue Boyce added, “1 in 4 women have a termination in their lifetime so this is absolutely an issue for voters; and it should be an issue that candidates are willing to stand up on, regardless of their political affiliation.”

It’s a pledge ask that’s also backed by The Human Rights Law Centre, Women’s Legal Service Queensland, White Ribbon and the Queensland Council of Unions.

¹ Queensland abortion law reform poll, Essential Research, February 2017.
Q: Do you think the law should be changed so that seeking or performing an abortion is no longer a criminal offence or should abortion remain a criminal offence? 76% - abortion should not be a criminal offence.
Q: If your local member of parliament voted for abortion to remain a crime in Queensland, would this make you more likely or less likely to vote for them? 60% - Less likely to vote for them.

“Queensland’s current abortion laws mean that women in need are being turned away from public hospitals, and rural women in particular face huge hurdles to accessing the reproductive healthcare they need. We need MPs who will change that,” Ms Carr added.

Manager of pregnancy options counselling service Children By Choice Amanda Bradley said, “Every week we hear from women and girls who are being harmed by the current system. From women who might be dealing with the outcome of sexual assault or abuse, or already struggling with the costs of caring for their children, or battling serious mental health issues.”

Fair Agenda’s candidate pledge remains open to candidates wishing to add their name to the supporter list.

The list of candidates who have signed the pledge so far is available on Fair Agenda’s website at http://www.fairagenda.org/qld_candidate_pledge.

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Also available for comment: Sue Boyce, former Liberal Senator for Queensland, 0439 757 960

Fair Agenda’s pledge question

Fair Agenda has asked all candidates to pledge that, if elected:

"I will vote to remove abortion from the criminal code, and support laws to ensure all Queenslanders can safely and legally access full reproductive healthcare, without being harassed or intimidated"

Specifically, taking the pledge means that candidates commit to support reforms that:

- 1) Treat abortion like other medical procedures, as a private decision for the pregnant person in consultation with their doctor, up until 24 weeks gestation. And also provide legal access to abortion beyond this point if the pregnant person consents and two doctors determine there is a risk of harm if the pregnancy is not terminated. (This is consistent with the Victorian Law Reform Commission's recommendations and Queensland clinical practice regarding foetal viability).
- 2) Ensure a doctor's personal beliefs don't get in the way of their patient's access to reproductive healthcare; by requiring doctors who oppose abortion on the basis of their personal beliefs to refer a patient seeking advice on, or provision of, an abortion to another provider who doesn't have the same opposition.
- 3) Create safe access zones that prevent harassment and intimidation within 150m of premises that provide abortion.