

# FAIR AGENDA

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## **Candidate stance on abortion could swing key votes this election**

New polling shows that candidates' stances on abortion could be crucial to their success in the Queensland election.

The polling, commissioned by independent community group Fair Agenda, shows that 50% of Queenslanders would be unwilling to vote for their preferred candidate if that candidate wanted accessing abortion to remain a criminal offence.

Among undecided voters the number rises, with 57% indicating this would be a deal breaking stance.

Overall, 67% of voters said the issue of decriminalising abortion in Queensland will be important in deciding who they vote for this election – this number rises to 80% among undecided voters, making this a key election issue.

“The current laws are hurting women, and voters overwhelmingly want to see change. This polling shows they're also willing to vote for it.” Said Renee Carr, Executive Director, Fair Agenda.

“Polling shows support among voters for decriminalising abortion across the political spectrum – it's time for a change in the law.”

This new polling showed 40% of One Nation voters said they would not vote for their preferred candidate if they wanted accessing abortion to remain a criminal offence, and that 56% of One Nation voters consider the issue important in deciding who they will vote for.

This follows public comments by One Nation state leader Steve Dickson earlier this month that “...we like things the way they are, and leaving things the way they are” on abortion.[1]

“The current, archaic abortion laws are particularly hurting rural women – who face huge geographic and financial barriers to accessing the reproductive healthcare they need. It's really disappointing that the One Nation state leader has indicated he wants to leave things the way they are.” Ms Carr added.

Fair Agenda's polling also shows that candidates who refuse to be transparent about their position on this issue could also pay at the ballot box, with 52.6% of all voters saying they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who refused to disclose where they stand on keeping abortion in the Criminal Code.

Fair Agenda has asked all major party candidates to commit to: *“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.”*

So far 147 candidates have taken Fair Agenda's pro-choice pledge, with four candidates answering that they would vote to maintain the current laws that place abortion in the Criminal Code.

On the weekend, Fair Agenda launched a tool to help voters find out which of their local candidates have taken their pro-choice pledge, and whether their local candidate represents them on this important issue.

So far a total of 162 candidates have responded to Fair Agenda's pledge question and gone on the record about their stance on abortion. But more than 200 have yet to provide a response to Fair Agenda's question about their stance.

The list of candidates who have signed up to Fair Agenda's pro-choice pledge can be seen online at [http://www.fairagenda.org/qld\\_candidate\\_pledge](http://www.fairagenda.org/qld_candidate_pledge)

Fair Agenda's new tool for voters is at [www.voteprochoice.com.au](http://www.voteprochoice.com.au)

- Photos from a recent *Handmaid's Tale* themed protest and video content sharing women's abortion testimonies are also available to package with any coverage. -

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### Summary of key polling results

ReachTEL conducted a survey of 1,255 residences across Queensland on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> November. The polling was commissioned by Fair Agenda.

- Q: *If your preferred local candidate in the upcoming Queensland election wanted accessing an abortion to remain a criminal offence, would you still vote for them? **50.1% of respondents said no. 57.1% of undecided said no.***
- Q: *If your local candidate for parliament refused to disclose whether they wanted abortion to remain a crime in Queensland, would you be more or less likely to vote for them? **52.6% of respondents said less likely. 46.4% of undecided said less likely.***
- Q: *How important is decriminalising abortion when deciding who you will vote for in this election? **67.2% of respondents said it was important, and 80.4% of undecided.***

A previous Essential poll conducted in February this year showed:

- **82%** of Queenslanders agree that it should be legal for a woman, in consultation with a medical professional, to decide to terminate her pregnancy. Including 80% of LNP voters, and 78% of ON voters.
- **88%** of Queenslanders think a woman living in rural or remote Queensland should have the same access to medical procedures – including pregnancy terminations – as women in the city.

Reference:

1. "There's no bill on the table, but we like things the way they are, and leaving things the way they are." Mr Dickson was quoted as saying in *More than 100 candidates make pro-choice pledge ahead of the election*, Brisbane Times, 5 November 2017.