



Trish Doyle MP

Member for Blue Mountains



02 4751 3298 | bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au | 132 Macquarie Rd Springwood NSW 2777

New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly

Minister for Women

10 August 2017

I thank the member for Newtown for moving the motion and reiterate my position on comments made by the Minister for Women upon her elevation to the Berejiklian Government's ministry.

For my initial effort in discussing a woman's right to choose, BuzzFeed and Huffington Post Australia recorded both my views and the epic eye roll when a male member tried to shut me down.

For too many years we have been fighting for women's reproductive rights and autonomy in the public and private sphere.

Again, I note the work of feminists before us in this place, especially those in the Women's Abortion Action Campaign. Established in 1972 the objectives of this campaign were to establish abortion as a woman's right to choose; the repeal of all abortion laws; free, safe abortions; free, safe contraception; and no forced sterilisations.

I believe a woman is best placed to decide what is best for her.

She knows the circumstances around a pregnancy and understands what she needs. She is the one who best knows her capacity to parent and her personal circumstances. It is the woman who should choose to continue or to terminate a pregnancy.

That does not make it an easy decision, and many women in that situation will need a lot of support to make the best decision for them.

I am pro-choice, I am a feminist, and I am in this Parliament to advance the cause of women.

The Minister for Women's statement that she is personally pro-life is problematic. It is commonly understood in women's politics that the "pro-life" label is shorthand for anti-choice. Long ago, fundamentalist Christian organisations co-opted the label, and they are well known for being steadfastly anti-abortion and anti-choice in all circumstances.

I strongly believe that people should be careful about using the term "pro-life" because its meaning is immediately interpreted to be a description of someone who believes they have the right to make other people's choices for them.

Hence my concerns about the Minister for Women's statement.

As I speak, somewhere near a clinic where women are seeking medical advice or a termination—which is never an easy decision—a loud and invasive group of people are waving placards and hurling abuse, all the while describing themselves as pro-life. However, they are being anti-choice and judgemental.

As a New South Wales co-convenor of EMILY's List, a very proud member of the Labor Party, and a feminist here to advance the rights of women, I support the member's pro-choice motion.