

MEDIA RELEASE

CHILDREN BY CHOICE SUPPORTS LABORS NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND CALLS FOR ALL PARTIES TO DO THE SAME.

Children by Choice welcomes Labors plan to address the inequities Australian women face in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare. The \$9.3 million initial commitment would make a significant difference to the current landscape.

Daile Kelleher, Manager of Children by Choice: "Children by Choice was pleased to be consulted on this important policy. We welcome consultation from all Australian political parties and call on them to release their own plans for a sexual and reproductive health strategy."

Of the plan to improve access to contraception Ms Kelleher said: "The current cost of LARC (Long Acting Reversible Contraception), can be out of reach for some women. A review of the Medicare rebate could remove this barrier to access and increase the uptake a contraceptive method which is more than 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. Similarly, with the contraceptive pill, cost can become a barrier with users having to visit their doctors every few months and pay consultation fees for repeat prescriptions. Reducing barriers and increasing the uptake of reliable contraception should be a priority for our Government and all political parties."

Ms Kelleher welcomed the commitment to ensure public provision and support the decriminalisation of abortion services nationally: "Abortion is healthcare and should not sit in the criminal code of any Australian jurisdiction. Currently, Australians face massive discrepancies in the provision of sexual and reproductive health care. A pregnant person's right to abortion care should not be determined by their postcode, financials or cultural background. We need national leadership from our parties and support from our public healthcare system to address these issues."

Labor also plans to commit to the professional support of GP prescribers of medical termination of pregnancy and fund an abortion referral telephone line.

"Children by Choice support these commitments as they will reduce the stress on and appropriately fund NGOs currently trying to fill these gaps. Small non-profit and advocacy groups across Australia have

been struggling to support GP's provision of medical termination of pregnancy by battling misconceptions about abortion and the law since the introduction of RU486 in Australia. Funding an abortion referral telephone line would also reduce the stress on small services like our own and enhance our capacity to do our primary work which is unbiased unplanned pregnancy, counselling, information and support.” Said Ms Kelleher.

Children by Choice would like to publicly thank the Labor Party for the hard work and careful thought they have given this policy we now urge the Government and all other Australian political parties to release their own plans for a sexual and reproductive health strategy prior to the election in May.

Children by Choice is an independent Brisbane-based non-profit organisation, committed to providing unbiased information, counselling and referrals for all unplanned pregnancy options – abortion, adoption and parenting. We also provide sexuality education to young people and professional development training for health and community sector professionals. Founded almost 50 years ago, we work to advance Queenslanders' reproductive choices, and to improve access to safe and legal abortion.

Daile Kelleher is available for media comment: 07 3357 9933