

25th August 2024

Attn:

Dear

I am writing to you as the CEO of Children by Choice asking you to pledge your support for maintaining and expanding access to safe and legal abortion in Queensland.

As a candidate for «*Electorate*» in Queensland's upcoming election on Saturday 26 October 2024, we are reaching out to ask you to pledge your unequivocal commitment to safeguarding and advancing access to safe and legal abortion services in Queensland—a fundamental right that is crucial for achieving true gender equality and improving women's health and wellbeing.

Please note, this letter is being sent to every candidate in every electorate in Queensland.

Reproductive choice in Queensland in 2024

Post decriminalisation of abortion in 2018, there have been slow gains in improving equal access to reproductive choice statewide. To make a difference, we must keep striving forward by improving accessibility.

We are thrilled that Children by Choice has been awarded funding from the current State Government to provide essential wraparound support services over the next four years. This funding is part of a broader \$41.8 million investment under the Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan 2032, which falls within the Miles Labor Government's \$1 billion Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032. This comprehensive strategy is a significant step forward in ensuring that every pregnant person in Queensland has access to the healthcare they need.

While we celebrate this progress, we remain deeply concerned about the global context surrounding reproductive rights. The recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States has highlighted the fragility of these rights, even in developed democracies. This stark reminder underscores the imperative to maintain and improve access to abortion in Queensland, ensuring that such regressions never take root here, and we see access to choice as fundamental to gender equality in our state.

Queenslanders want improvement to abortion access, not diminishment

We know that only a very tiny minority of Queensland voters oppose abortion access. **A diminishment of access to reproductive choice and quality health care for women and pregnant people would not be favourable to any candidate.** With nearly 90% of Queensland voters in favour of legal abortion, the public strongly supports this legal right. However, we must remain vigilant and proactive in protecting it.

We are asking for your commitment to:

- Ensure that legislation protecting **access to abortion remains robust and unmitigated.**
- **Support ongoing initiatives aimed at improving access to abortion services**, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised communities, as well as those in rural, remote, and regional areas of our State.
- **Advocate for the continued progress of reproductive healthcare** as outlined in Queensland Health's Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032 including the commitment to the Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan.

Pledge your support

Counselling, information, education and support on all pregnancy options – Abortion, Adoption and Parenting

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We invite you to pledge your support for maintaining and expanding access to safe and legal abortion in Queensland, by responding to this letter via email stating you commit to supporting access to Termination of Pregnancy in Queensland as part of your election commitment. We have a deep understanding that the Termination of Pregnancy Act was put to a conscience vote in 2018, and that is why we are reaching out to candidates individually to pledge their support.

Your pledge should “affirm your support for maintaining and expanding access to safe and legal abortion in Queensland.” Your pledge will signal to your constituents and all Queenslanders that you are committed to protecting their rights and wellbeing.

Children by Choice will be reporting the responses from candidates to our supporters in our Statewide Election Update ahead of International Safe Abortion Day on 28 September 2024. We will be hosting an event with the community and sharing with the community and media outlets across Queensland about the outlook in Queensland for ongoing safe abortion access.

We would appreciate your response to these important policy positions by 26 September 2024 to allow us to properly inform our community prior to the election. We will be making this list public and available to all Queenslanders.

We look forward to your response and to working together to ensure that Queensland remains a leader in reproductive healthcare.

Invitation to meet

In addition to your public commitment, we invite you to meet with us individually to discuss this crucial issue in more detail. **I would love an opportunity to meet with you directly**, to engage about our knowledge of abortion access in Queensland, and Australia, in more detail.

Please contact me directly to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely,

Jill McKay

CEO

Children by Choice

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Children by Choice is a proud, independent community-based organisation with over 52 years of experience advocating for reproductive rights. Funded as an essential service under the Department of Justice and Attorney-General’s Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence portfolio, as well as under Queensland Health’s Women and Girls Health Strategy 2032, we play a critical role in supporting reproductive choice for pregnant people’s access to healthcare, gender equality and quality healthcare. **We are a strong, unified organisation, backed by thousands of passionate activists across the state, all dedicated to ensuring equitable access to reproductive healthcare for all.**