




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Sexual and Reproductive Health

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (2.48 pm): Every woman and girl in Queensland deserves the right to safe and timely sexual and reproductive health care close to home and this Labor government is committed to providing equitable access to termination of pregnancy services for Queensland women, no matter where they live. This is why we removed termination of pregnancy from the Criminal Code in Queensland and earlier this year we passed legislation to break down the barriers faced by women to access safe and timely termination of pregnancy services. However, the LNP is a threat to a woman's right to choose. We know that almost all of those opposite voted to keep abortion in the Criminal Code and last month voted against expanding access to abortion services. Many of those opposite have not hesitated to make their outdated, paternalistic and moralising views well known. The member for Everton said that our laws could be interpreted 'as nothing short of legal killing' and results in lifelong guilt and bitterness in women.

On 5 March 2024 I responded to a question without noticed asked by the member for Macalister about women's reproductive rights and in my answer I referred to statements made by the member for Kawana during the Termination of Pregnancy Bill debate. I note for the benefit of the House that the member for Kawana was giving a personal account of his thoughts about abortion and referred to his personal position as weak. He was not attributing his personal position to others in that statement, so I would like to withdraw my earlier comments. However, the member for Kawana did go on to say that pregnant teenagers could take an easy way out under this bill and terminate their pregnancy.

These statements made by the LNP remain an important reminder that there are still people in this very parliament who are determined to take a stand against a woman's right to make decisions about her own sexual and reproductive health. We are seeing this play out in the United States right now, with access to safe terminations of pregnancy stripped away under the guise of health and safety. We may look at these cases and think that this can never happen here and that what is happening in the US—the stripping away of hard fought rights for women—could never happen here, but here is the truth: the rhetoric and the policies that we see from the LNP in this chamber are the very same as those of the right-wing US politicians. They will always be a threat to women's reproductive rights. The only way to ensure that women and girls in this state keep those hard fought for rights is to re-elect the Miles Labor government.