




Speech By
Hon. Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Termination of Pregnancy

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (9.38 am): In 2018 Queensland took the important step of legalising access to termination of pregnancy. As the health minister at the time, I was honoured to be part of that historic reform despite the vehement campaign by anti-choice campaigners. No person makes the decision to terminate a pregnancy lightly. We want women to have the support and access to services they need at what is undoubtedly a challenging time. That is why our government has announced a funding boost for termination-of-pregnancy services as part of the Women and Girls' Health Strategy. That law reform removed the fear, the stigma and the uncertainty caused by Queensland's then archaic laws, and now we have gone a step further. Soon we will release our Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan, which sets out our commitment to making sure Queenslanders have equitable access to safe termination of pregnancy.

That plan under our Women and Girls' Health Strategy is underpinned by a \$41.8 million investment. Importantly, this new funding will establish a virtual early termination-of-pregnancy service, which means people in rural and regional Queensland will have access to the same services their friends, sisters, cousins and aunties do in our cities. It is our government that made it easier to access oral contraception and UTI medication, it is our government that backed the removal of GST from sanitary products and it is our government that is ensuring all hospital and health services across the state commence appropriate care within 10 minutes of disclosure of a sexual assault by a patient at any of our emergency departments.

There is always more to do, but we have a strong track record of keeping Queensland women healthy and safe—a track record of investment, not cuts. In the three years prior to our government, programs for women were savagely cut—services like BreastScreen and DVConnect. There were tens of thousands of dollars cut from women's shelters, women's services and domestic violence support agencies. Keeping women and families safe is why we have invested more than \$1.5 billion in domestic, family and sexual violence services and programs, and we continue to make progress. We have already achieved more than 50 per cent representation of women on government boards ahead of schedule and continue to champion the progression of women into leadership positions, the most recent appointment being Sally Stannard—the first ever female director-general of Transport and Main Roads. Progress in the highest levels of our Public Service is contributing to a major reduction in the gender pay gap within the Public Service. In 2022 the gap was 7.64 per cent; by 2023 the gap had dropped to 6.31 per cent. This is in stark contrast to the 12.58 per cent gap recorded in 2014. This week we will see more policies put forward by our government and debated in this House—policies that put Queensland women at the forefront, policies that only a Labor government can deliver because we will always back Queensland's women.