



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Termination of Pregnancy

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.23 pm): I was intending to speak today about the failure of the sports minister to deliver the Queensland Sport Strategy. As one of his only clear commitments, this strategy was to be delivered in September. Then it was November. Now we are in February with no strategy, no explanation and only a quiet update on the department's website suggesting it might arrive sometime this year. I wanted to speak of the urgency of this overdue strategy, given the unprecedented pressure on our sporting clubs across Queensland, but that contribution will have to wait because I cannot look past the extraordinary week that the Queensland LNP have had. It would be laughable if it were not so desperately serious, particularly for Queensland's women.

This week the member for Mackay crossed the floor to lift the Premier's gag order that was preventing members of this parliament from debating a woman's right to choose. What followed made one thing abundantly clear: this was no accident. In a public interview with Cherish Life the member for Mackay openly outlined his personal pro-life views. He spoke of growing unrest within the LNP on this issue, and he admitted that he did not believe his colleagues when they promised there would be no changes to Queensland's abortion law. This tells us that, during an election campaign, Queenslanders were given public assurances that abortion laws were safe while members of the LNP privately knew that these laws were at risk.

We know that the member for Mackay is not alone. A known anti-abortion activist has recently been appointed to the LNP Women's committee. The member for Rockhampton has publicly stated that abortion is the greatest human rights abuse of our time. The members for Gympie and Scenic Rim are both on the record opposing a woman's right to choose. This is not coincidence; this is coordination.

When you look at the comments on the member for Mackay's social media where he is being called a hero, it becomes clear whom this behaviour is designed to appease. I would like to tell the House who the real heroes are. The heroes are the Queenslanders who voted with Labor to protect a woman's right to choose. The heroes are the women who make an incredibly difficult decision about their own bodies and then endure harassment, abuse and graphic protests simply for accessing health care. The heroes are the doctors, the nurses and the human rights defenders who face intimidation for providing safe and legal medical care. The heroes are the women who for more than 50 years have defended bodily autonomy, dignity and access to universal health care.

When Cherish Life's CEO confirms, following a discussion with the member for Oodgeroo, that abortion laws are considered untouchable in this term but vulnerable next term, that should send a chill down the spine of every Queenslander who believes that women and girls deserve access to health care. This is not leadership; this is a dictatorship. It explains why we are now seeing dissent, division and dysfunction on the LNP backbench.