



Women's Declaration International - Australia
c/- PO Box 273
Summer Hill NSW 2130

20 May 2022

Report on WDI Survey Results
Political candidates from all parties lack consistent commitment to
Women's Sex-Based Rights

The Women's Declaration International sent a survey to political candidates in advance of the upcoming Australian Federal election to raise awareness of the Declaration and the need to protect women's sex-based rights.

Over 60 political candidates from around Australia completed our survey, but no responses were received from the Coalition parties and very few from Labor and the Greens. However, political candidates from some of the smaller parties were more forthcoming. Here is a summary of the responses to each of our questions which indicates that none of the parties can be consistently relied upon to defend women's sex-based rights. The full data set can be made available on request.

1. Do you agree that legal recognition of sex should be based on chromosomal, gonadal and anatomical characteristics rather than on self-declaration?

Almost all political candidates responding agreed with this proposition, with the notable exception being the two Greens candidates who responded and John August of the Fusion Party, Thong Sum Lee from the Citizens Party and one independent, Michael Gravener. Another member of the Fusion Party was unsure.

2. In your view can a man ever give birth?

Out of 61 responses, half a dozen political candidates responded to say that they believe a man can give birth or were unsure of their view on this. These confused individuals included one independent (Michael Gravener), and an assortment of candidates from the Liberal Democrats (Alison Marshall), One Nation (Ross Taylor and Neil Turner), the United Australia Party (Elvis Sinosis, Alex van der End) and the Greens (James Cruz).

3. i) Do you support women and girls having unimpeded access to contraceptive and abortion services through the public health system?

Disturbingly, around half of political candidates responding opposed or were unsure about the right to unimpeded access to contraceptive and abortion services. This included a selection of political candidates belonging to the Australian Christian Party, the Australian Family Party, the Citizens Party, the Democratic Labor Party, the Informed Medical Options Party, the Liberal Democrats, One Nation, United Australia Party and an independent from New England.



Women's Declaration International - Australia
c/- PO Box 273
Summer Hill NSW 2130

There was significant inconsistency within parties with candidates for the Informed Medical Options Party (2 Yes, 1 No, 2 unsure), Liberal Democrats (4 Yes, 4 No, 6 unsure), One Nation (6 Yes, 2 No, 4 unsure) and United Australia Party (2 Yes, 4 No, 4 unsure) all divided on the issue of women's reproductive autonomy.

ii) What is your position in relation to surrogacy?

It was also disturbing to receive 13 responses from political candidates who support legalising commercial surrogacy. They hailed from a range of parties including the Australian Federation Party, the Citizens Party and the Australian Value Party and particularly from the Liberal Democrat Party. Another 24 only supported altruistic surrogacy while 23 were not sure of their position. Disappointingly none of the political candidates expressed support for a complete ban despite the exploitative abuse of women and children taking place under these arrangements.

4. i) Do you support the use of laws (such as hate speech and vilification provisions) to silence women from questioning gender-based ideology?

Fortunately, only John August from the Fusion Party responded yes to this question, while Jan Pukallas of the Citizens Party and Andrew Jackson from the Democratic Labor Party in Queensland were unsure. All other candidates responding expressed opposition to the use of the law to silence women in this manner.

ii) Do you support the use of laws to force people to adopt terminology and the use of pronouns in a manner that undermines women's rights to freedom of opinion and freedom of speech?

All candidates answered no to this question, except again for John August and two other members of the Fusion Party who were unsure whether women's rights to freedom of opinion and freedom of speech should be undermined in this manner.

5. i) Do you support the continuation of spaces and services (e.g.: women's refuges, safe rooms at court, DV services and women's health services) which cater specifically to meet the special needs of women (adult human females) and which exclude biological males, including those who claim to be women?

Almost all political candidates responded in support of the continuation of women's spaces and services that exclude males, except Independent candidate Michael Gravener, who answered 'no', James Cruz from the Greens (who answered 'yes' and 'no') and Shari Ware from One Nation who was unsure.



Women's Declaration International - Australia
c/- PO Box 273
Summer Hill NSW 2130

ii) Do you recognise the right of lesbians, as same-sex attracted women, to exist and to meet, socialise and partner with other women free from harassment by males who identify as women?

Only Isabel Tilyard, Federation Party candidate to the Queensland Senate did not support the rights of lesbians to meet free of males. A handful of others from various small parties and Immanuel Selvaraj, ALP candidate in Mitchell, NSW, were unsure.

6. i) Do you support the use of sex-based political quotas and other affirmative action measures to increase representation of women in political and public life?

It was disappointing that only 14 candidates responded in support of the use of sex-based political quotas to increase representation of women, while 15 were unsure and 31 were opposed.

ii) Do you believe women's quotas, scholarships and other special measures designed to advance the rights of women should include males who identify as trans women or non-binary?

Only 7 out of 61 political candidates believed women's quotas, scholarships and special measures should include males who identify as trans or non-binary, while another 3 were unsure. It was reassuring that 48 answered 'no'.

The political candidates in favour of extending these measures to males identifying as trans and non-binary were Thong Sum Lee of the Citizen's Party, John August from Fusion, Independent Michael Gravener, Toni McLennan from the Informed Medical Consent party, Immanuel Selvaraj from the Labor Party and both the Greens members who responded. A couple of Liberal Democrats and a member of One Nation were unsure.

7. Do you agree with the inclusion of males who identify as women in women's sports?

Only 4 out of 61 political candidates who responded agreed with the inclusion of males who identify as women in women's sports. The four were Thong Sum Lee from the Citizen's Party, John August from Fusion, James Cruz from the Greens and Independent Michael Gravener. Another 5 candidates were unsure of their position while all others were opposed.

8. i) Do you support calls for legislation criminalising domestic and sexual violence to be specific to the protection of women and children from male violence, so that these provisions cannot be weaponised against women by male perpetrators?



Women's Declaration International - Australia
c/- PO Box 273
Summer Hill NSW 2130

It was hopeful to see 27 of the political candidates from across the political spectrum respond in support of calls for legislation specific to the protection of women and children from male violence, although 12 were opposed and 20 were unsure.

ii) Do you support the Nordic model, whereby women providing prostitution services are free from any threat of prosecution but men who use or profit from prostitution are criminalised?

23 political candidates did not support the Nordic model, 10 were in favour and 25 were unsure. Unfortunately those in favour often held other positions inconsistent with support for women's sex-based rights.

i) For children presenting with gender dysphoria which approach do you support?

It was reassuring to read that most political candidates favoured *"a wait and see approach and counselling to explore if there are any underlying issues"* except 8 candidates who were unsure and just one Greens candidate (ACT Senate candidate James Cruz) who opted for an *"affirmation model of treatment and the use of puberty blockers, hormones and surgical interventions."*

ii) Do you support the dissemination of material through schools and popular culture that encourages a false understanding that it is possible to change sex?

The same Greens candidate, James Cruz, also voted in favour of the dissemination of material through schools indicating that it is possible to change sex, as did Isabel Tilyard, Federation Party candidate to the Queensland Senate. All other candidates opposed this, while John August from Fusion and three others from various parties indicated they were unsure.

Conclusion

None of the parties represented in these responses consistently support women's sex-based rights.

Tally of responses received: Liberals – 0, Nationals – 0, Labor – 1, The Greens – 2, One Nation – 12, United Australia Party – 10, Liberal Democrats – 14, Informed Medical Options Party – 5, Fusion – 3, Australian Values Party – 1, Citizens Party – 2, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers – 1, The Greatest Australian Party – 1, Australian Christians (WA) – 1, Australian Family Party – 1, Federation Party – 1, Democratic Labour Party (QLD) 1, Independents - 5

Women's Declaration International (WDI) is a group of volunteer women from across the globe dedicated to protecting women's sex-based rights. Our volunteers include academics, writers, activists, lawyers and health practitioners. More information can be found on the website and Facebook pages for WDI and for the [Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights](#).

Media Contact: Anna Kerr, anna@womensdeclaration.org 0402 467476