



12th of August, 2022

Hi there,

Integrity has become one of the most important issues to voters, the recent Federal election made plain.

Here in Victoria, you only need to look at the headlines to see why.

In a matter of days I'll be launching my campaign ([you're invited, too](#) 🤝), where I'll make the case for why the two-party system is broken, and why we need more Reason in the Parliament.

5 DAYS LEFT TO [SUPPORT MY BILL](#)





RIP two-party system. You will not be missed.

No wonder people are fed up. The benches of the Federal Parliament are heaving with evidence – the Teal independents and the swollen Greens ranks.

Over the past several decades, the mainstream parties' combined share of the vote has fallen from 99 per cent to less than two-thirds.

In only about 100 days at the November 26 state election Victorian voters too can tell the mainstream parties enough is enough.

On the basis of my record and agenda, I am appealing to you to re-elect me, an original Teal, and to the state in general to put more independents into our Parliament.

Just because something is legal does not make it right.

The standards rightly expected of lawmakers - so many of whom mouth the rhetoric of public interest but clearly subordinate that to party, personal, factional, and vested interests - are higher.

Those who make the law must not only not break the law but honour the spirit and intent of the law.

And if the law is flawed, it requires scrutiny and reform - neither of which are likely unless there is external pressure on the majors.

The behaviour of the mainstream parties tars us all. That's not ok, I reckon.

Integrity is not optional. You've got to earn it and maintain it.



Want progress? You gotta to vote for it.

I am looking forward to getting together on Wednesday 24th August to share our vision for yet another Northern Metropolitan election win. Please ensure you [RSVP](#) to let us know you are coming.

[RSVP](#)

If you are keen to step up and help, I'd love it. Please add your name to the growing list. Get Involved [here](#).



Religious hospitals' god-awful fail

Fundamental human rights are being denied in public hospitals.

People who pay for the health system are being mistreated by the health system.

Denominational hospitals receive billions of taxpayers' dollars, but some block on the grounds of religious ideology legally enshrined rights for women to access abortion and family planning, and the right of all people, under strict circumstances, to assisted dying.

Publicly funded hospitals and other health institutions have no right to refuse the legally enshrined rights that a woman has control over her body and reproductive health and that some terminally ill people have access to assisted dying.

Legislation I tabled only last week can fix this and will be debated in Parliament next week. I appeal to both sides of mainstream politics to support it.

The Bill protects abortion rights and extend abortions and family planning services. It ensures end-of-life rights.

Religion is a blessing to many, but imposed religious faith has no place in the public health system.

My Bill does not undermine any rights of people within the private health system, where people have choice over service providers, some of whom receive no money from the public treasury.

On the contrary, it protects medicos' rights from institutional edict – a hospital will not be able to prevent a doctor from performing legal procedures.

Institutions, by legal definition, have no conscience, therefore cannot argue conscientious objection to abortion and assisted dying. The reliance of some institutions on the false construct of institutional conscientious objection has no rational, legal, or moral basis.



Silent victims

Last week, I also tabled the Report into Children Affected by Parental Incarceration, by the Legal and Social Issues Committee, which I chair.

This has led to calls on the government to reform bail laws to reduce the harm caused to children by their parents being imprisoned.

Parental incarceration interrupts childhood development and hurts emotional and social wellbeing, exposing children to greater risk of poor mental and physical health outcomes.

In turn, this can lead to intergenerational trauma and incarceration.

There are about 7000 children whose parents are in prison in Victoria.

No department, as we found in this report, has line of sight on them, has any care for them, whether that is when the police arrest their parents, whether that is when their parents go before the courts or whether that is when their parents are then in the corrections system.

No-one is seeing these children. Well, we saw them and we heard from them. We must protect these children. We are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and these children are protected under that convention.

I am particularly ashamed of the number of Aboriginal children taken into care as a result of their parents being incarcerated.

Aboriginal children are losing their parents at a greater rate than they were last century when we were removing them from their families.



Politics: too important to leave it to the blokes

It's sure as hell been a bad few weeks for liberty and rights.

A shocker was a law imposed by the Andrews Government and the Opposition, both pillars of authoritarianism, to deny protestors' rights.

I voted against it. Of course.

There are sufficient existing laws to deal with any untoward activities.

The law crudely utilizes an OHS framework (without evidence of documented OHS incidents) to ban forest protest – protest activity that has led to successful court cases and relates to now endangered species.

Under the incoming law, the maximum jail sentence and fines for hindering, obstructing or interfering with timber harvesting operations would be upped to 12 months and more than \$21,000.

It is draconian and tin eared. And this after the climate crisis federal poll.

The ALP and the Liberal-led Opposition have given yet another reason to vote for independents and small parties.



For the record: gimme opt-out shelter

But wait, there's more!

The Government seems intent on peak overreach.

It wants to legislate to force citizens to place their medical records into a central database.

While many people would be happy to link all this info, the civil liberties deficit of this bill is deep and ugly.

There are many other people who would prefer not to be involved. There are solid arguments such systems are more effective if they are opt-out rather than opt-in. Fair enough.

The idea of streamlining the system is not in itself a problem; it indeed makes sense. The problem is that this, as with the undue heavy handedness of the protest legislation, is draconian and denies rights.

There is no valid argument for denying people the right to opt out. It undermines civil

liberty.

I'm going to fight this one as hard as I can.



Shout-out: Mazel Tov!

I was grateful to be invited to welcome and speak with the Australasian Union of Jewish Students in Parliament House in recent days. They had some terrific questions on a range of issues from the Health Care system to my work as an independent.



Links on shrooms and more

Finally, a few links you might be interested in:

- In my regular session, [The Odd Couple](#), on Neil Mitchell's 3AW morning show with Bernie Finn, who was expelled from the Liberal Party for his extreme and often vile views and so now joins me on the crossbench, we got into a heated discussion about harm minimisation and drugs. Bernie seems to have no idea about facts and harm minimisation. Finn is the fish that actually leaps on the hook, bless him
- It was pleasure to have a long discussion with RRR's Amy Mullins on her fabulous Uncommon Sense morning show about lots of issues, and about my ongoing agenda for change. Subscribers to RRR, one of the many gems in my electorate, you can hear it [here](#).
- Our latest [local fashion flourish](#)

Again, I'd love you to join us in this election and help own the change you want to see. It's fun. It's exciting. And it provides the thing that so many find gives us meaning – being connected to something bigger than ourselves.

Thanks, and go well.

Fiona