



2nd of August

Hi there,

Amid the freezing mornings, blustery days, and periods of radiant sunshine. Let's focus most on the sunshine. I'll try to give some here.

First, the news I need to share with you about abortion and assisted dying.

Today I am moving legislation to protect and extend fundamental human rights currently being denied in public hospitals. The health system is mistreating those who fund it.

[SUPPORT MY BILL](#)



Bill big news

Publicly funded hospitals and other health institutions have no right to refuse these 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.

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 will:

- protect abortion rights and extend abortion and family planning services ensure end-of-life rights.
- extend access to abortion and contraception across all hospitals that get taxpayers' money.
- have zero impact on the rights of individual medicos to refuse to participate in certain services on the basis of personal religious conviction or conscientious objection.

It 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.

It protects and insists upon the rights of patients in the public health system. They should not have to depend on their postcode for access to the full panoply of public health services.

If you support this change, please urge your local MPs to support my bill [here](#).



From safe access to more access

It reflects my focus on women's health, which led to safe access zones to private abortion clinics. This bill is in no small part about progressing from safe access to more access.

It buttresses my longstanding call for nurses and midwives to be permitted to perform abortions.

It fits, too, with my initiative, embraced by the Victorian and Federal governments to create ground-breaking research and treatment of the crippling hidden disease of endometriosis and other chronic pelvic pain.

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.



C'mon Albo

We've made progress but much more change is need. It is disappointing Prime Minister Antony Albanese deflected calls only last week for increased access to abortion and contraception by saying it's a matter for the states.

This is a man who only recently decried the appalling decision of the US Supreme Court - overturning the landmark 1973 Roe v Wade decision that established a constitutional right to abortion – to return abortion law to state governments, many of which immediately stamped on women's rights.

Well, my legislation is a state response. It's based on first principles and can and should be supported across the political spectrum.

Women are half the population, but women's health affects us all. And all of us are going to die, in circumstances none can know in advance. This is about every human, and some stuff can be readily remedied.

In politics, the perfect should not prevent the good. And in life, the ideological should not prevent the rational.



Original teal as the next election looms

Keeping the sunshine beaming, I'm utterly delighted that Reason Party – not my office, but the organisation's headquarters – has been joined by the fabulous, formidable Mel Audrey as campaign manager as the state heads into the election, which I will fight to win with my record and evidence-based public-policy ideas based on the things that have driven me during decades of advocacy and change-making:

- accountability
- transparency
- fairness
- equality of opportunity (not outcome)
- efficiency

- effectiveness

Here's our Mel!



And here're some words from Mel:

It's been a dynamic first two weeks as Campaign Manager for Fiona's re-election. A highlight has been meeting the incredible staff and learning how impactful Fiona has been during her past two terms. Whilst it may feel like the election is a long way off, in reality, there is a lot of work to be done!

I'm currently writing the Campaign Strategy and look forward to sharing how we will win soon. To that end, please 'SAVE THE DATE' for our first major campaign event to take place on Wednesday 24th August.

We have a number of volunteer roles available, starting with our Social Media Coordinator. If you are interested in this position please see the PD [here](#).



Tripping

People all over the world are seeking solutions, and I've been travelling a bit during the winter to share ideas. I've just returned from speaking at a conference in Malaysia and before that

was in Europe. It's mostly been about harm minimisation, and how government can best serve and collaborate with communities.

Vaping's a searing, cloudy health debate.

I recently was an invited speaker at an international conference in Warsaw on vaping and harm reduction. We're far from getting this issue right in Australia.

Smoking tobacco is the leading preventable cause of illness and premature death, and the harm reduction effects of vaping on this cohort are beyond dispute, the international evidence proves.

But Australia, in contrast to other industrialised economies, is blocking adults from accessing a harm minimisation device that would probably save their lives and would certainly save taxpayers' health resources.

At the same time, there's the worrying rise in the illegal use of vapes by children. This is a group not addicted to tobacco smoking. Properly apply existing laws to prevent them ready access to this evidently dangerous path is a no-brainer. Get on with it.

After Poland, I visited Malta, England and Scotland, where innovative, effective, progressive policies are being implemented to allow people choice at end of life, legally access cannabis, provide affordable and safe shelter, safety approaching abortion clinics.

Malta has just joined the growing lists of nations reducing drug harm through regulation, the rational response to evidence prohibition has failed disastrously.

It's an argument I've been making for years and on which the government has finally committed to act, should it be returned, by trailing at my behest blanket diversion to treatment and counselling, rather than an encounter with the criminal justice system, of all apprehended for possession of small amounts of illicit substances.

The Malta model duplicates the recommendation that I put to the Inquiry into Cannabis which was voted down.

A number of the places I visited are adopting effective solutions to homelessness, something we can do so much better on here, where the stock of public housing has halved in recent times and there's insufficient collaboration between businesses, governments and the not-for-profit sector on social housing.

And Scotland has just announced that they will introduced law reflecting legislation I introduced here to create exclusion zones around abortion clinics.



A terrific tipping point

Meanwhile, getting back to my Malaysia speech a few days ago, I was delighted to be able to acknowledge that nation's government's enlightened move - in line with policies I have been espousing for years and which are being adopted the world over – to legalise and regulate drugs and to bring people with drug problems into the health system, rather than ramming them into the criminal justice system at great costs to taxpayers, people in need and to the cause of humanity.



Black days for Red Shirts

I know I'm trying to stick with sunshine, but there is dark stuff, too. Recent investigations by the Victorian Ombudsman and IBAC have confirmed and highlighted the appalling behaviour of the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party in stealing from taxpayers by using staff to improperly pursue political ends.

Premier Daniel Andrews rightly apologised for the disgraceful behaviour. The Opposition said it proved the Victorian Government per se is corrupt. It did not, and it said the Premier was innocent of any wrongdoing.

There are two problems here:

1. The law needs to be amended so that such conduct is illegal; currently the situation is grey.
2. The ALP – not the government, which is overseen via multiple mechanisms - needs to clean up its own grubby backyard.

And, one must say, the police came out of it looking appalling too, having dramatically and wrongly raided and arrested at dawn close to 20 former ALP staffers four years after the 2014 dirty deeds.



The wrap

The recent federal election demonstrated the community's urgent, surging desire for accountability, fairness, and climate action.

The increase in the diversity of our national parliament reflects a vote that went one third to the ALP, one third to the Libs, and one third to The Greens and the so-called Teals (and a couple independents). That has fallen from almost 100 per cent several decades ago to the two major groupings. Two-party politics is dead, and it's thrilling to be part of the progress that evolution opens.

As one of the original Teals (along with Cathy McGowan in the Federal Parliament), I wish the 47th Australian Parliament a fruitful time governing in the national interest.

There's a hell of a lot to get done, to fix, to change, and I'll be talking to you about that soon.

But, most of all and as ever, I'll be listening to you.

Cheers,

Fiona
