

How to Decriminalise Abortion

My experience as an activist down-
under

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- Academic researcher/ethicist/author
- *The Abortion Myth*
- *What, No Baby?*
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Ground Zero in Oz

- In Oz, abortion is regulated by the states
- It remains in the Crimes Act everywhere but the ACT
- ACT best legal regime in country because it was
 - repealed from the Crimes Act
 - (largely) regulated like all other medical procedures at all gestations

Ground Zero in Vic

- Crime for a woman to *unlawfully* abort herself or for anyone else to *unlawfully* abort her
- Common law judgments in Vic & other states define *lawful* abortion as one a medico deems necessary to preserve a woman's physical or mental health
- Prosecutions of doctors for unlawful abortion occurred in Vic & similar jurisdictions '86, '87, '98, '06
- Qld woman & her boyfriend tried this year. Not guilty
- Unclear gest limit in Vic

Objectives

- Repeal the Law
 - Remove all references to abortion from Crimes Act
 - No replacement references to the procedure in the Crimes Act or anywhere else
 - Abortion regulated like all other medical procedures

To Do List

- Drive abortion law reform on to the political agenda (this can take years)
- Get government or backbencher to put forward a repeal bill
- Defend that bill from amendments so we achieved repeal and a clear and certain law

Challenges

- Most women not aware abortion in the Crimes Act
- Most politicians happy with *status quo*
 - abortion in criminal law
 - few prosecutions, acceptable access (aint' broke, why fix it?)
 - While 81% of Australians prochoice, 4-9% of anti-choice aggressive
 - Issue divisive w/in parties

Form a new group or campaign

- Fresh start with media
- Freedom to speak freely and act quickly
- Put key people in key roles
- Work together: divide tasks, link only w/ orgs that prioritise issue over ego
- Develop efficient ways to meet, decide, liaise & act

Identify Strategy, key decision-makers & pts

- Who are your friendly MPs from all parties? (Backbenchers, newbies & pre-retirement)
 - What do they suggest as means to achieve your to-do's
 - What will they do? Will they really do it? Will they work together?

Drive Abortion Law Reform on to Political Agenda

- Develop key messages
- Letters/opinion pieces paper
- Email/letters to MPs
- Constituents & eminent persons speaking to MPs
- Online info and advocacy
(Facebook/Twitter/Web interface
petitions/emails to decision-makers)

Stand up for the Politicians v. x

prochoicevic.com/node/46

Leslie Cannold : Late

Other Bookmarks

ProChoiceVic

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Stand up for the Politicians who Stand up for Choice

Abortion is no longer a crime in the state of Victoria. In 2009, Victorian women less than 24 weeks pregnant have the right to decide for themselves about abortion. After 24 weeks, women can still get help.

The law changed because pro choice MPs stood up to be counted. Now, pro choice Victorians must stand up for them.

[Help pro choice politicians win at the 2010 state election](#)

Labor, Liberal and Greens MPs voted to reform Victoria's antiquated abortion law. Right-to-life groups are now threatening to unseat the politicians who voted for choice at the upcoming state election.

Stand up for the MPs who stand up for choice. Donate to Pro Choice Vic so at the 2010 state election, we can make sure pro choice politicians win.

[Support Victorian MPs who stand up for choice](#)

Pro Choice Vic. Our choice. Our voice.

For news and updates, join ProChoiceVic!

E-mail: *

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Make a secure Paypal donation

Fields marked with * are required.

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Amount:*

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Full name:*

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Key Messages: Repeal

- Abortion is a medical procedure. For some it is a procedure with moral implications
- The medical aspects of the procedure must be regulated in the same way as all others so as to provide:
 - certainty and clarity to providers and patients;
 - consistency w/ current practice & other health law (law and ass)
- Those who identify moral aspects must be allowed to manage them in ways consistent with their religious, cultural & social values

What Worked

- Message cut-through (media sympathy)
- Wonderfully terrible antis
- Professional body support (Vic AMA, RANZCOG)
- Web based campaign structure
- Politicians willing to work across party lines
- Luck
- Referral to the Victorian Law Reform Commission

Model B (whatever it was)

- All political negotiation lends to compromise
- Never start with what you want
- Good prochoice outcomes means demanding and fighting for more than we want but having clear bottom lines
- Ambit claims including conscience clause (which we got!)

Abortion Law Reform Bill

- The Abortion Law Reform Bill
 - Before 24 weeks abortion like any other medical procedure (woman decision maker and standar informed consent)
 - After 24 weeks 2 Drs reasonably believe appropriate in all circs. Must have regard all rel med and current & future phy, psyc& social circs
 - Med prof must inform of conscience obj, make effective referral and provide in life-threatening emergency

Victoria's abortion laws
are about to change.

Make your voice heard.

Join the campaign to give
women the right to decide.

ProChoiceVic
our choice, our voice.

Make your voice heard*

Share your thoughts or experiences and tell the politicians why abortion is every woman's right.

Please return to:

**AFFIX
STAMP
HERE**

Pro Choice Victoria
c/o 116 - 118 Wellington Parade
East Melbourne VIC 3002

When Victorian politicians make their choice about how to regulate abortion, I want them to respect mine.

- Remove all references to abortion and child destruction from the Crimes Act.
- Regulate abortion like all other medical procedures.

It's my conscience, my life, my right to decide.
Respect my choice. Respect my voice.

First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Age: _____ Email: _____

I understand that my voice may be used publicly at the discretion of Pro Choice Victoria in the fight for women's rights.*

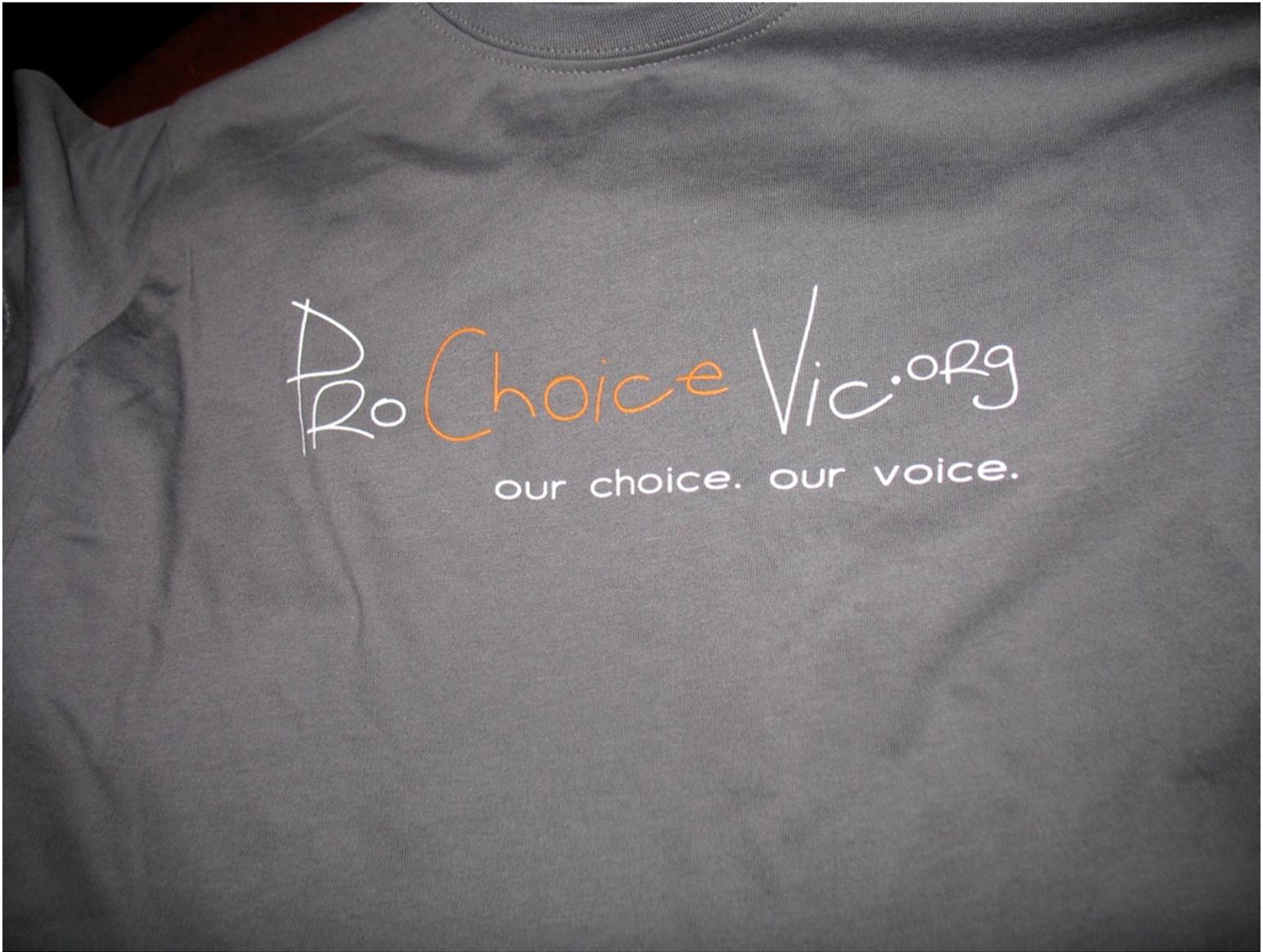
Signed: _____

Go to www.prochoicevic.org to join the fight on line.

*For more information about proposed abortion law reform in Victoria and how your voice will be heard, visit www.prochoicevic.org

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At 10:30pm on Friday Oct 10 2008

- The Abortion Law Reform Bill became law
- More than 3 yrs after activists began agitating for change the bill passed convincingly and without amendment
 - Women voted 28 to 8 for law reform, Men 28 to 27







