



Alan Baker Independent

The incumbent chose not to respond to the questions posed.

2015 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION DERWENT

Candidates Questionnaire

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1. Sexualisation of children is a significant problem facing our society. Other states are considering the possibility of restricting outdoor advertising to the equivalent of a G rating to ensure that public places are safe for children. Would you support such a move in Tasmania?

I think this is a great idea. There is an old saying, "sex sells". But do you really want to sell like this to children? Children need to be given the chance to maintain their innocence, and limit exposure to unnecessary over-sexualised advertising.

2. Significant interest is growing internationally in the Nordic approach to prostitution, first pioneered in Sweden, which protects prostituted women by criminalising the purchase, and not the selling, of sex. Would you support an inquiry into the Nordic approach to prostitution?

I have not had the chance to investigate this topic at all, I have just had a quick read now, and there is a lot of information for and against it. It would require a very in-depth review of everything to be able to make an informed response to this one, so I couldn't comment right now sorry.

3. Do you support the current federally funded chaplaincy program in schools?

I think that this is great. Giving children of all faiths access to someone that isn't a teacher, but who is trained to listen and support them is fantastic. The more people that can listen and help guide our kids, the better

4. In most states, private schools are free to positively select students who support the beliefs and ethos of the school. Tasmania is the only jurisdiction in Australia where religious schools are not given an exception from anti-discrimination laws for student enrolment.

Do you support the right for faith-based schools to give preference to students who have religious beliefs, affiliations or activities consistent with those of the school?

I thought that these schools already had this choice, and I was surprised to hear that they didn't. Having a school with like-minded people is often a good idea, as long as being given this ability doesn't allow for other forms of discrimination.

5. Poker machines cause a great deal of social harm to vulnerable people. In Tasmania, over \$200 million was lost on poker machines in 2014. Bet limits on highly addictive poker machines can help curtail losses for problem gamblers who make up nearly a quarter of poker machine users.

Do you support the introduction of \$1 bet limits as recommended by the Productivity Commission's 2010 report?

I think poker machines should be removed from pubs and clubs to make people make the active effort to go to a Casino to lose their money. It should help to make it harder for these people to lose their money.

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6. There have been nine separate attempts to redefine marriage in Australian Parliaments since 2010 including attempts here in Tasmania. In December 2013, the High Court unanimously ruled that marriage is a federal, and not a state, issue. Will you oppose any moves to redefine or mimic marriage in Tasmania?

I support marriage equality. People have a right to choose how they want to live their lives. If people want to be with someone else of the same gender, I see no problems with this, just like there is no problem with people choosing their own religion.

7. Euthanasia has been rejected multiple times by Australian jurisdictions, including by Tasmania in 1998, 2009 and 2013 because of concerns that it cannot be made safe from abuse. Will you oppose attempts to legalise euthanasia in Tasmania?

Euthanasia might be a good thing, if used in the correct setting. People deserve the right to lead a good life, towards their end stages, they need to have the support of their family, friends and health care providers to ensure they are comfortable and well cared for. If managed well, there should be little need for euthanasia, but for some people, the pain and suffering can be very great. Having watched my father suffer from cancer, and watching him go downhill, the last thing we thought about was euthanasia, as his case was very well managed by his GP. But I have heard of others screaming for someone to "end it all" these are the people that need to be candidates, not people that have a terminal diagnosis. Live life as long as possible and as healthy as possible.

8. There is community unease about the abortion law changes enacted last year.

The Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013 obligates a doctor with a conscientious objection to abortion to provide a list of service providers (who don't hold such an objection) to patients seeking an abortion or other pregnancy advice. This potentially violates the doctor's freedom of conscience by forcing them to be complicit in a practice with which they may disagree.

Would you support an amendment to the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013 removing this obligation?

No. People need to be able to make an informed choice. My family GP is great at explaining all aspects of everything and allowing people to make their own choices. If someone is already suffering the stress from an unexpected pregnancy due to bad circumstances, they last thing they need is a lecture from a GP who is anti-abortion. They need a chat with a person who is open to all things. Maybe it could be good to get these people referred to a counsellor who is open to both sides to ensure that the choice being made is the right one for the parent/s and the pregnancy.

9. According to a February 2013 Galaxy poll, the majority of Tasmanians oppose late term abortions except in cases of severe disability. Despite this, Tasmania's abortion law continues to allow abortion up until birth.

Would you support an amendment to the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013 to remove the provision for late term (post-20 weeks) abortions except when a mother's life is in danger?

I have not looked into this matter, but from memory, I think there is a requirement that two doctors need to sign off on this. A pregnancy is a person from this time or very close to it, some guidelines need to be in place, but I have not studied the matter to be able to pass judgement on what is currently law on this issue.

10. Freedom of speech and the right of assembly and protest are important aspects of a healthy democracy. Recent abortion law changes in Tasmania have made it an offence (with penalties of up to 12 months imprisonment) to participate in peaceful protest within “access zones”, any area within 150 metres of an abortion clinic.

Would you support an amendment to the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013 removing the provisions relating to access zones?

No. If people are going to terminate a pregnancy, and have already been through necessary steps, the last thing they need is someone trying to change their mind. For most of these people, it will be the worst day of their lives, let's not make it any harder for them. An unborn life is important, but so too is the mothers. There might be circumstances that make it the right choice. Australia needs more right choices in all matters.