

# Does the Gender Composition of an Opposition Influence its Role on Women's Issues?

**John E.S. McCulloch**

*University of Queensland*

It might very well be assumed that when a political party develops a 'critical mass'<sup>1</sup> of women MPs, that these women will seek to address issues in the community that are discriminatory against their sex, and that their party will begin to develop a more consciously positive attitude towards promoting (or at least not opposing) legislation designed to improve the status and well-being of women. Indeed, in the case of a party in government, this trend is well illustrated in Australia by the Hawke Government's innovative legislation designed specifically to improve the status of women, during the period 1984-87. In the case of a party in opposition, however, the trend is much less clear-cut, and this paper explores some of the paradoxes in the roles of Australian Oppositions.

## Introduction

This paper consists of a discussion of eight pieces of legislation in four Australian parliaments—Commonwealth, Queensland, Victorian, Tasmanian—as examples of how Opposition (and to a lesser extent, Government) MPs, especially the women, have behaved in promoting (or at least not opposing) legislation designed to improve the status and well-being of women. All eight bills deal with controversial issues including equal employment for women, euthanasia, homosexuality, domestic violence, abortion and RU486. It is not argued that these are exclusively women's issues nor, in the case of euthanasia, that it is a woman's issue at all. What is argued, however, is that they are all important issues that impinge on women, and they clearly demonstrate that women MPs are much more likely to vote for reform in these areas than their men counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Critical mass' is a term borrowed from physics to explain the representation and behaviour of women MPs. The most common figure posited by historians is 30%, and the understanding is that when this 'critical mass' is reached, it will induce improvements in the behaviour of MPs inside the parliament, including fewer late-night sittings, more consensual politics, and more balanced legislation and public policy outcomes especially with respect to women. Cf. Donley Studlar and Ian McAllister, "Does a Critical Mass Exist? A Comparative Analysis of Women's Legislative Representation (Update of a Paper Given at the American Political Science Conference 1999)," (2001), Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox, *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

I use the term 'free vote' in preference to 'conscience vote' on the basis that, just because a party absolves its members from conforming to a particular way of voting on a given issue, does not mean that all individuals will necessarily follow the dictates of their conscience. They might, for example, succumb to external forces including pressure from their electors or threats from those upon whom they depend for preselection. One MP expressed the view that, 'I am not here to represent my conscience; I am here to represent the conscience of the people who elect me'.<sup>2</sup> In addition, I use several abbreviations and acronyms which are listed at the end of the paper.

### **Commonwealth** (Liberals in Opposition)

#### *Equal Employment (Commonwealth Authorities) Bill of 1987*

In the mid-1980s the Hawke Government introduced a trilogy of bills, designed to enhance the status of women. The first two—the *Sex Discrimination Bill* 1984 and the *Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Bill* 1986—received general Opposition support. Why the passage of the final bill in the trilogy created an enormous furore when the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Ralph Willis, introduced it into the House of Representatives on 19 March 1987 is unclear, given the relatively smooth passage through both houses of parliament enjoyed by the other two bills. One can but wonder whether some of the Opposition MPs had actually read the bill when Australia's first female speaker, the Hon Joan Child, called Peter Slipper (LPA-Fisher), who regaled the House of Representatives with:

This bill is ideological gibberish. It is an attempt by the ALP to play up to extremist left-wing groups, including some women's groups in our society...We are sad that the ALP chooses to denigrate the woman who chooses to stay at home, the woman who wishes to raise her family, the woman who wishes to be a housewife. There is nothing wrong with being a housewife.<sup>3</sup>

The Coalition's vehement opposition to the bill led to the resignation of the Shadow Minister, Peter Baume. The main thrust of this bill was to extend the provisions of the other two bills to cover Commonwealth authorities including Telecom Australia,

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<sup>2</sup> Australia. Parliament. House of Representatives., "Parliamentary Debates [Hansard] New Series," (Canberra: Govt. Print.), 18, 6 Dec 2006, 41. Tony Windsor (IND-NSW).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 26 Mar 1997, 1615-16.

Australia Post and the Commonwealth Banking Corporation. It passed its second reading along party lines, but when the House divided on the third reading on 26 March, Steele Hall (LPA-SA), crossed the floor to vote with the Government in supporting the bill. It was passed 70 votes to 44.<sup>4</sup> The bill was introduced into the Senate by Gareth Evans, the Minister for Resources and Energy, on 30 March and passed its second reading on the voices on 1 May 1987. The bill's third reading in the Senate on 5 May—when it was passed 42-18—witnessed a most extraordinary spectacle which saw seven LPA senators cross the floor to vote with the government.<sup>5</sup> Amazingly, all the LPA senators who crossed the floor in support of the bill were men, while all the LPA female senators opposed the bill!<sup>6</sup> The Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, supported the bill and the Opposition Leader, John Howard, opposed it.

### **Commonwealth** (Labor in Opposition)

#### *Euthanasia Laws Bill of 1996*

When this bill was introduced women MPs had not yet reached 'critical mass' in the Federal Parliament and comprised about 22% of the total, but they had done so in the Senate with around 32%. This was certainly one of the factors for the closeness of the Senate vote, because all the women AD senators (Lyn Alison, Vicki Bourne, Cheryl Kernot, Meg Lees, Natasha Stott Despoja), the AG senator (Dee Margetts), 62.5% of LPA women (11% of LPA men) and 67% of ALP women (65% of ALP men) senators opposed the bill.

The objective of this private member's bill was to overturn the Northern Territory legislation permitting euthanasia, and to prevent future legislation of this type in the NT, the ACT or Norfolk Island. It was introduced into the House of Representatives by Kevin Andrews (LPA-Vic) on 9 September 1996. It was given a free vote, and read a second time in the House where it was supported 91-38, and then a third time

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 154, 26 Mar 1987, 1646.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Baume (NSW), Robert Hill (SA), David McGibbon (Qld), Chris Puplick (NSW), Baden Teague (SA), Michael Townley (Tas), Reg Withers (WA).

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Guilfoyle, Susan Knowles, Jocelyn Newman, Margaret Reid, Amanda Vanstone and Shirley Walters.

(88-35), both on 9 December 1996.<sup>7</sup> The Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Opposition Leader, Kim Beazley, supported the bill. This may have influenced the vote of MPs who tend to follow their leaders, but not in the case of the ALP senators, who voted strongly against the bill.<sup>8</sup> The Senate passed the bill by a much smaller margin (38-34 and 38-33) than the House, and disclosed a large gender gap.<sup>9</sup> Whereas only 24% of females in the House opposed the bill's second reading and only 21% its third reading, this rose to 70% on both occasions in the Senate. The difference between the vote of male MPs and Senators was marginal.

### **Commonwealth** (Labor in Opposition)

#### *Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial Responsibility for Approval of RU486) Bill of 2005*

This was a private senator's bill co-sponsored by four female senators from different parties<sup>10</sup>—a potent example of the willingness of women politicians to collaborate across party lines in the interest of their sex—and was also the subject of a free vote. The intent of the bill was to remove responsibility for the approval of the abortion drug RU486 from the Minister for Health and Ageing (at that time Tony Abbott), and transfer responsibility for its approval to the Therapeutic Goods Administration. The bill passed comfortably through the Senate<sup>11</sup>—45-26 at the second and 45-28 at the third reading on 9 February 2006—and through the House of Representatives later the same month where it was supported 95-50 at the second reading.<sup>12</sup> The bill passed the House on the voices at the third reading on 16 February 2006.<sup>13</sup>

What was extraordinary about this bill was the huge gender gap evident in both chambers. In the Senate, 89% of the women, but only 48% of the men supported the

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<sup>7</sup> Australia. Parliament. House of Representatives., "CPD." 16, 9 Dec 1996, 8061-62, 8074-75.

<sup>8</sup> Australia. Parliament. Senate., "*Parliamentary Debates [Hansard]. New Series*," (Canberra: Govt. Print.). 6, 24 Mar 1997, 2293-94.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 6, 24 Mar 1997, 2331.

<sup>10</sup> Fiona Nash (NPA-NSW), Judith Troeth (LPA-Vic), Claire Moore (ALP-Qld), Lyn Allison (AD-Vic).

<sup>11</sup> Australia. Parliament. Senate., "CPD," 1, 9 Feb 2006, 59-60, 122-23.

<sup>12</sup> Australia. Parliament. House of Representatives., "CPD," 2, 16 Feb 2006, 52-53.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 2, 16 Feb 2006, 63.

bill at the second reading (46% at the third reading). In the House the bill received the support of 81% of the women and 61% of the men. On this occasion the Prime Minister, John Howard, opposed the bill but, given that 51% of the LPA supported it in the House, this clearly had little influence on the outcome. The Leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley, and Kevin Rudd supported the bill, which may have helped the attainment of extremely high ALP support (92%) in the House.

The composition of the women's vote across party lines, although very high, differed markedly between the two chambers, in that 100% of ALP, but only 54% of LPA women, supported the bill in the House, whereas 85% of ALP and 88% of LPA women supported it in the Senate. Both the AG, Christine Milne and Kerry Nettle, and AD senators, Lyn Allison and Natasha Stott Despoja, voted for the legislation. Of the NPA women, one MP (Kay Hull) and one senator (Fiona Nash) supported the bill, and one MP (De-Anne Kelly) opposed it. The large female support no doubt reflected the fact that the bill was co-sponsored by inter-party women senators. There may have been a further reason for the high support among Coalition women, however, in the context of a deep-seated anxiety of a veto regarding an important women's issue residing with a male Health Minister, in this case Tony Abbott, whose very conservative views on women's reproductive issues were well-known.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For more analysis of the Euthanasia and Therapeutic Bills, cf. Deirdre McKeown and Rob Lundie, "Conscience Votes During the Howard Government 1996-2007," *Research Paper*, no. 20 (2009).

**Queensland** (Nationals and Liberals in Opposition)*Criminal Code and Another Act Amendment Bill of 1990*

This was a government bill introduced by the Attorney-General, Dean Wells, on 21 November 1990.<sup>15</sup> The LPA allowed its MPs a free vote. It passed through its second and third reading very easily (51-32) along party lines on 28 November 1990, accompanied by an excess of outrage from Opposition MPs, including this tirade:

There is also the huge cost burden that the community must carry because of the preference of a few homosexuals for buggery and the preference of the Labor Party for homosexuals...The very nature of homosexuality is subversive to family life generally, and who has not heard of the ghastly stories of the homosexual perverts who prey upon the children of others.<sup>16</sup>

With only 10% of MPs, the women in the Queensland Parliament were still a long way from achieving 'critical mass', however, they were still able to demonstrate that women will support progressive legislation even if it is of a morally contentious nature. In this case, of course, the ALP did not allow its MPs a free vote. Nevertheless, the women who supported the bill later indicated, during interviews conducted by me, they would have done so in any case. The NPA woman (Di McCauley) was the only woman to oppose the bill, while the LPA woman (Joan Sheldon) joined seven of her ALP sisters to support it, and one ALP woman (Judy Spence) did not vote. Thus, 78% of the total women MPs supported the bill (compared with 55% of men), 11% opposed it (men 39%), and 11% (men 6%) did not vote. LPA Leader, Denver Beanland, was the only Opposition man who supported the bill.<sup>17</sup> The Premier, Wayne Goss, supported the legislation and the Opposition Leader, Russell Cooper, opposed it.

**Queensland** (Nationals and Liberals in Opposition)*Domestic and Family Violence Amendment Bill of 1999*

This was a government bill introduced into the Queensland Parliament by the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, Anna Bligh, on 8 June 1999.<sup>18</sup> It was non-contentious until the minister introduced an amendment at the committee stage which changed section five of the bill regarding the definition of 'spouse' to include persons

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<sup>15</sup> Queensland. Parliament. Legislative Assembly, "Parliamentary Debates [Hansard]," (Brisbane: Goprint.), 316, 21 Nov 1990, 5024.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 317, 28 Nov 1990, 5503. Trevor Perrett (NPA-Barambah).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 317, 28 Nov 1990, 5517, 5522.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 350, 8 June 1999, 2185.

of the same or opposite sex who reside together or who have resided together as a couple. This, she said, was to correct an anomaly in the original bill that excluded people in same sex relationships from protection against domestic violence. At this point, the Opposition which had supported the bill at its second reading, decided to oppose the amended bill.<sup>19</sup> The amendment was passed 38-37 on the chairman's casting vote, and the bill then passed its third reading 38-37.<sup>20</sup> This was an extraordinarily low vote given that there were 89 MPs, and the passage of the bill (as amended) was clearly important to the credibility of Minister Bligh. One Opposition MP, Vaughan Johnson, had warned Government MPs:

I urge members of the Government to have the guts, determination and forthrightness to vote against this amendment. Even if it means splitting the Government they should do it, because Jesus Christ will strike them dead in the end if they do not.<sup>21</sup>

All those who supported the bill were from the ALP; while 18 NPA, seven LPA, all the IND (7) and all the ONP (5) MPs opposed it. Of the 14 MPs who did not participate in the division, seven were ALP, five NPA and two LPA. Enthusiasm for supporting an issue that discriminated against lesbians (as well as gay men) was not apparent among the female MPs. Both IND women (Liz Cunningham and Dolly Pratt) and both NPA women (Judy Gamin and Fiona Simpson) opposed the bill, while the LPA woman (Joan Sheldon) and ALP women (Julie Attwood and Judy Spence) did not vote. Nevertheless, of the total women MPs (16), 56% supported the bill (compared with 40% of the men), 25% opposed it (men 45%), and 19% did not vote (men 15%). The Premier, Peter Beattie, supported the bill and the Opposition Leader, Laurence Springborg, opposed it.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 353, 12 Nov 1999, 5057-59.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 353, 12 Nov 1999, 5078-79.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 353, 12 Nov 1999, 5062.

**Victoria** (Liberals in Opposition)*Abortion Law Reform Bill* of 2008

Victoria's *Abortion Law Reform Bill* of 2008 attracted much more cross-party support among women MPs than had Western Australia's a decade earlier.<sup>22</sup> It was a government bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Women's Affairs, Maxine Morand, on 19 August 2008, and was read a second time. It was given a free vote, and comfortably passed both its second reading (48-28)—when 78% of women and 57% of men supported it—and then its third on 11 September (49-32), at which 79% of women and 53% of men supported it.<sup>23</sup> Women across the spectrum supported the bill in the Assembly—82% of the ALP women (83% at the third reading), 60% of the LPA women, and the sole NPA woman in the Assembly.<sup>24</sup> This was not the case with the men and, although the ALP men supported the bill even more strongly than the women in both divisions (87% and 84%), the LPA men gave it very low support (13% and 11%). The Premier, John Brumby, and the Opposition Leader, Ted Baillieu voted in favour of the bill, all six NPA men against, and the sole IND man supported the bill.<sup>25</sup>

On 10 October 2008 the Legislative Council passed the bill 23-17 at both its second and third readings, and the gender split was similar to that of the Assembly (75% of women and 50% of men in favour), however, the composition of the vote was vastly different.<sup>26</sup> On this occasion, 100% of the ALP and both the AG women supported the bill, but only 40% of the LPA women. The support of the ALP men was much lower (64%), but that of the LPA men much higher (30%), while one NPA man voted for

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Jasmina Brankovich, "Constructing a Feminist Morality in the Western Australian Abortion Debate, 1998," in *Fresh Cuts: New Talents 2001*, ed. Elizabeth Ruinard and Elsbeth Tilley (Brisbane: API Network and UQP, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> This difference was caused by four additional MPs voting at the third reading only—Ann Barker (ALP) who voted in support, and Terry Mulder, Ryan Smith and Bill Tilley (all LPA) who voted against the bill.

<sup>24</sup> Three women (all ALP) did not vote—Judith Graley, Kirstie Marshall, and the Speaker, Jenny Lindell.

<sup>25</sup> Victoria. Parliament. Legislative Assembly., "*Parliamentary Debates [Hansard]*," (Melbourne: Govt. Print.), 11 Sep 2008, 3632-33.

<sup>26</sup> Victoria. Parliament. Legislative Council., "*Parliamentary Debates [Hansard]*," (Melbourne: Govt. Print.), 10 Oct 2008, 4206-07.



and the other against. The IND man, Craig Ingram, voted for the bill and the DLP man, Peter Kavanagh, against it. This bill is the final example of women MPs demonstrating a tendency to co-operate across party lines to achieve reform of laws that impinge upon women and women's issues.

### **Tasmania** (Labor in Opposition)

#### *Criminal Code Amendment Bill of 1997*

In 1997 Tasmania became the last Australian State (or Territory) to decriminalise consenting sex between adult men in private. When an attempt at reform by the Field Government was rejected by the Legislative Council in 1990s, law reform advocates appealed to the United Nations Human Rights Committee which found that Tasmania's anti-homosexual laws violated the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In the meantime, in 1993, another bill failed 12-6 in the Legislative Council and, on the basis of the UN findings the following year, the Federal Government sought to overturn the Tasmanian law by passing the *Human Rights Sexual Conduct Act* of 1994. Gay activists launched an action in the High Court the following year.

Finally, in 1996, the Tasmanian Government changed its mind on homosexual law and decided to have a free vote on the issue which, despite comfortably passing the House of Assembly, again failed in the Upper House. The following year the Rundle Government decided to support the Greens' *Criminal Code Amendment Act Bill* (No. 10), a private member's bill introduced by Christine Milne on 11 March 1997.<sup>27</sup> Although the Assembly did not divide for the bill's second reading, it overwhelmingly supported its third reading 27-6. It was a different story in the all-male Council, however, where the bill received very reluctant support (9-7) when read a second time on 16 April 1997. The Council did not divide again for the bill's third reading. All nine women in the House of Assembly—Fran Bladel, Lara Giddings, Judy Jackson, Gill James and Paula Wriedt (ALP), Sue Napier and Denise Swan (LPA), and Di Hollister and Christine Milne (TG)—voted as a block across party lines to support this reform. Of the 40 male parliamentarians who voted, only 52% supported reform

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<sup>27</sup> Tasmania. Parliament., "Votes and Proceedings," (Hobart: Govt Print), 236, 11 Mar 1997, 26.

compared with 100% of the 9 females. The Premier, Anthony Rundle, and the Opposition Leader, Jim Bacon, supported the legislation.<sup>28</sup>

### **Tasmania** (Liberals in Opposition)

#### *Criminal Code Amendment Bill of 2001*

By the time the Minister for Health and Human Services, Judy Jackson, introduced this bill on 19 December 2001, women in the Tasmanian Parliament had reached 'critical mass' for the first time, with about 29% of members in both Houses. The legislation sought to clarify the law relating to abortion that currently existed in Tasmania, and to place the decision to terminate a pregnancy in the hands of a woman and her doctor. The passage of the bill through both Houses of the Tasmanian Parliament was an especially good example of the willingness of female politicians to co-operate across party lines to ensure a good legislative outcome on crucial decisions affecting women. It should be noted that all nine women in both Houses of Parliament supported this bill.

There was also a vast difference in the composition of the Legislative Council in the four years since it reluctantly passed the homosexual law reform bill. Its numbers were reduced (as were those of the House of Assembly) and nine of its members, including the president, were replaced by five new faces including four women—Lin Thorp, Allison Ritchie and Silvia Smith, all from the ALP, plus Independent Sue Smith. With their sisters in the Assembly—Fran Bladel, Judy Jackson and Gill James (ALP), Sue Napier and Denise Swan (LPA), plus Peg Putt (TG)—they worked to ensure the smooth passage of this, what can only be described as fairly rushed legislation, through the parliament. All three readings in the Assembly took place on the same day with divisions which supported the bill at both the second (15-5) and third (15-8) readings.<sup>29</sup> The following day (20 December 2001) it was introduced into the Council by Lin Thorp, and passed through all stages the same day without a division<sup>30</sup>—possibly the fastest abortion law reform anywhere in the world! Although

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 236, 26 Mar 1997, 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 242, 19 Dec 2001, 659-65.

the Legislative Council did not divide, it can be reasonably deduced from the above collaboration among the 10 women parliamentarians that all supported the legislation. Of the 17 men who cast a vote at the bill's third reading in the House of Assembly, only 53% voted in favour. This contrasts with 100% of the women. The Premier, Jim Bacon, and the Opposition Leader, Bob Cheek, supported the legislation.

## Conclusion

Of the foregoing eight pieces of legislation, five were government bills and three were private members (or senators) bills. Two of the government bills were accorded a free vote by the major parties, and a third government bill was given a free vote by the LPA only, and the other two were not allowed a free vote by any of the major parties. All the private members bills enjoyed a free vote. Naturally, those not given a free vote saw the leaders on separate sides with their members supporting them. In the case of the Queensland homosexual reform bill of 1990, however, where the LPA (but not the major coalition partner, the NPA) had a free vote, its leader voted for the legislation.

The other five bills saw both leaders support the proscription of euthanasia, and abortion reform in both instances and Tasmanian homosexual law reform, but differ on RU486, domestic violence and Queensland homosexual law reform. It is probable that the way the leader votes holds considerable sway with party members who prefer not to be seen disagreeing with their leader. This was borne out in the euthanasia debate where the LPA followed the Prime Minister but the ALP was split. In the House ALP MPs followed the Opposition Leader whereas in the Senate they did not. The reverse occurred in the RU486 debate with a divided LPA voting with the Prime Minister in the Senate but not in the House, while the ALP followed the Opposition Leader in both places. Regarding the Tasmanian bills, the MPs of both parties voted with their leaders for homosexual law reform, but with respect to abortion reform, only ALP MPs followed their leader, while LPA MPs divided equally. The odd one out was the bill to reform the Queensland homosexual laws, inasmuch as the NPA/LPA Coalition partners split on the subject of a free vote. As we have seen, the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 242, 20 Dec 2001, 577-78.

LPA leader voted for the legislation but, with one exception—Joan Sheldon—was not joined by the other members of his party.

Of all the bills, perhaps the most bizarre behaviour occurred during the third reading debate of the *Equal Employment (Commonwealth Authorities) Bill* of 1987 in the Senate. It not only indicated an apparent reversion by the Liberal Opposition with respect to its former positive attitude towards the status of women, but also an astounding gender role-reversal within the Opposition itself on the issue. The bill was not accorded a free vote and yet an unprecedented 47% of LPA male senators (but no LPA women senators) crossed the floor to support it. Thus, 73% of men senators supported the bill compared with only 60% of women senators. All LPA female senators opposed the bill.

Apart from this single example, however, it is apparent that opposition women MPs are more likely to support legislation designed to improve the status of women, and contentious legislative reform with an ethical or moral dimension, than are their male colleagues. This is especially true of the ALP in opposition (and in government) but not quite as clear-cut when the LPA is in opposition as the above example shows. In fact, it has often been LPA men including Peter Baume, Jim Carlton, Nick Greiner and Ian Macphie who have been most outspoken in their support for women.<sup>31</sup>

The following tables show the votes recorded at the second and third reading of the above bills. The figures indicate the percentage of MPs who supported the vote. It is divided by opposition, government and other, and each of those by gender. Only ALP and LPA percentages appear under opposition and government. 'Other' includes the NPA and all other parties.

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<sup>31</sup> John McCulloch, *From Suffragists to Legislators*, 2 vols. (Rockhampton, Qld.: Central Queensland University Press, 2005), 83.

Lower House<sup>32</sup>

Bill	Reading	Support	Opposition		Government		Others	
			(W)	(M)	(W)	(M)	(W)	(M)
1987	2nd	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
	3rd	61%	0%	3%	100%	100%	na	0%
1990	2nd	61%	50%	3%	100%	100%	na	na
	3rd	61%	50%	3%	100%	100%	na	na
1996	2nd	71%	25%	53%	81%	82%	0%	78%
	3rd	72%	25%	53%	86%	83%	0%	78%
1997	2nd	75%	100%	36%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	3rd	82%	100%	62%	100%	100%	100%	100%
1999	2nd	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
	3rd	51%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%
2001	2nd	75%	100%	29%	100%	100%	100%	na
	3rd	65%	100%	38%	100%	70%	100%	na
2005	2nd	66%	100%	85%	54%	51%	50%	18%
	3rd	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
2008	2nd	63%	60%	13%	82%	87%	na	100%
	3rd	60%	60%	11%	83%	84%	na	100%

Upper House<sup>33</sup>

Bill	Reading	Support	Opposition		Government		Others	
			(W)	(M)	(W)	(M)	(W)	(M)
1987	2nd	55%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	40%
	3rd	70%	0%	47%	100%	100%	100%	56%
1996	2nd	53%	33%	35%	50%	89%	0%	73%
	3rd	54%	33%	37%	50%	88%	0%	73%
1997 <sup>34</sup>	2nd	56%	na	100%	na	100%	na	42%
	3rd	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
2001 <sup>35</sup>	2nd	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
	3rd	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
2005	2nd	63%	85%	77%	88%	30%	100%	50%
	3rd	62%	85%	67%	88%	32%	100%	44%
2008	2nd	58%	40%	30%	100%	64%	100%	50%
	3rd	58%	40%	30%	100%	64%	100%	50%

<sup>32</sup> The House of Representatives carried the second reading of the 1987 bill and the third reading of the 2005 bill on the voices. The second reading of Queensland's 1999 bill was also carried on the voices.

<sup>33</sup> Because Queensland lacks an Upper House, the two Queensland bills are not listed in this table.

<sup>34</sup> There were no women in Tasmania's Upper House at the time. The 1997 bill's third reading was carried on the voices.

<sup>35</sup> Tasmania's Upper House carried both the second and third reading of the 2001 bill on the voices.

## **Abbreviations**

AD	Australian Democrats
AG	Australian Greens
ALP	Australian Labor Party
Assembly	Legislative Assembly or House of Assembly
Council	Legislative Council
CPD	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
House	House of Representatives
IND	Independent
LPA	Liberal Party of Australia
MP	Member of Parliament
NPA	National Party of Australia
QPD	Queensland Parliamentary Debates
TG	Tasmanian Greens

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