

## JAMES ASHBY INTERVIEW WITH MICHELLE PINI

### TRANSCRIPT

#### Questions sent by SMS to James Ashby

- 1. You've been in the public spotlight for some time as a spokesperson and adviser. How does it feel to be running for election yourself?*
- 2. You've also been spending time with Pauline Hanson in the seat of Keppel — is Ms Hanson feeling confident about the election?*
- 3. How do you feel about your chances and have you had any polling indications?*
- 4. What do you see as the red hot election issues?*
- 5. What is your position on Katter's Australian Party's abortion bill?*
- 6. Given your law and order platform and your previous assault conviction, do you think you are the right candidate for Keppel?*

#### Transcript

*Q You've been helping others campaign, how does it feel to be running yourself?*

**A** [Recording missed beginning of answer]...just trying to show them the guiding way when it comes to how to campaign, so to do it myself, I now realise how hard this is.

*Q Well, obviously you're enjoying it?*

**A** Well you have to. And that's the only way you can look it. It's democracy at its greatest because it allows everybody with a view and an opinion and a policy platform to put their hand up if they've had a gut-full. Ah, in Qld here, it's \$250 to nominate and you get your say.

*Q \$250 is pretty good?*

**A** Well that is the good thing about Qld. It is ultimately an affordable way to put yourself up there. If you're unhappy with the political system, the way in which it's being run, it's an opportunity for all people, all members of the public to put their hand up, and say, hey, I'll give this a go myself because I'm just not happy with the way in which the two major parties are playing.

*Q Red hot election issues (as above).*

**A** For me personally, I have seen regional Qld in particular – what I've seen here, locally, is complete neglect for regional Qld and in particular this seat of Keppel where I live, our hospital system has been left to rack and ruin and while we have great people that work within the system, they are really treading water at the moment. We are in desperate need of specialists. And I'll give you a few examples.

We don't have ear nose and throat specialists here within our public system. We don't have cardiac specialists who can treat people for heart attacks and give them, you know, a stent.

We have a shortage of maternity here in our region. The hospital in Yeppoon where I live, ah, when I moved here in 98, you were still able to have a baby in our local hospital here. That was an old hospital. We've now got a brand new hospital and no maternity ward. So, ah, in a region which has rapid growth, particularly young families, ah, to not have maternity here on the Capricorn coast any longer, it's, ah, it's really, it's a disaster.

And you know there's a great deal of pressure placed on our hospital system here in central Qld. And, you know some may argue, well the hospital's not in Keppel, but it is in Rockhampton, Rockhampton is, well, 40 per cent of my electorate is in Rocky, the rest is the Capricorn Coast, but Rockhampton is the centrepiece. And it's the hospital that acts as the centrepiece for the whole of central Qld, so it services more than just one or two electorates it's servicing four or five. And so, hospital needs in our regional areas are so critical. We shouldn't have to go to Brisbane in order to get some of the most simplest procedures (sic), when we've got the, certainly, equipment here already, we just don't have the expertise. So, hospitals here are crucial.

Um, also too, our education system. We have an urgent need for new high schools to be built, particularly in towns like Emu Park, it's got 174 per cent growth between the last two census periods, that's 174 per cent growth in families and yet no new high schools.

*Q What are your thoughts on Katter Party abortion bill (question as above)?*

**A** Well, I'm not interested in the Katter Australia Party's abortion bill. We've put forward some amendments of our own, federally, and they are the same amendments I would make on a state level, here, to legislation that was created in 2018, here in Qld by the Labor Party, which allows a mother to have an abortion right up until the day before birth. Now, a lot of people are unaware that the legislation that Labor introduced goes to that extent, but also too, the legislation **does not** provide medical assistance to babies born alive through a botched abortion, here in Qld. Those babies, sadly, are left to die on a clinical bench within a surgery within that hospital – I just find that abhorrent, especially given that in the emergency department next door, you've got doctors desperately working to save the life of a premature baby. Right next door to one that's been left to die because of a botched abortion.

*Q Don't women only go into abortion situations that late in pregnancy for medical reasons? I'm sure nobody's going to wait until the day before the baby's due to decide to have an abortion?*

That, well, that's untrue. That is just proven untrue. For medical reasons, we understand the need to provide women with the opportunity, if it means the life of a mother versus (sic) that of an unborn child, there is grounds for those procedures to take place. And I wouldn't

stand in the way of that. But we are talking about legislation with unintended consequences, which has resulted in women being able to make a decision that just, for whatever reason, it might be financial decision (sic), it might be for others, but to terminate the life of a child right before birth, is, is not appropriate.

*Q Right. Is that the only area on which you disagree with abortion?*

Yeah, that's ... For One Nation, we understand that it is an individual's right to make these decisions, but there have to be safeguards put in place, to protect the lives of these unborn children, that, for, for whatever reason, you know, we know after talking to countless doctors and nurses, that some people are going in for these procedures because it's just not the right gender. Or financial situations have changed. And I think that there are opportunities there for, greater counselling to be placed on offer before a decision of that, that calibre is made.

But we also see the need, that you know, we've got some wonderful assistance programs, whether it be through government assistance or non for profit organisations, you know, that are there to lend assistance, particularly when it does come to financial circumstances. So, ... and, and that's all were asking. We're asking for amendments to be made to the legislation that doesn't remove the rights of a woman to make decisions when it comes to their own bodies, but we want greater consideration given to the fact that it is, ah, a life, particularly in the second and third trimester.

And we want those women to know that there is support out for them, uh, out there for them, when it comes to ah you know, following through. If it does come down to financial reasons, you don't have to go through with that procedure.

And we just want more wraparound services for women. We want more wraparound services for those babies that are born alive. And certainly, there's more born alive than what we think. And um, its traumatic. Its traumatic for, for the, ah, nurses and doctors that are involved in the procedures. And um, we just think that there's gotta be some protections put in place. By all means, we don't want to see women um, seen as, as doing something illegal or held criminally responsible for the choice of having an abortion, but we do want them to know that there are other options available to them, particularly when it comes to late term abortion.

*Q So let's move to law and order if you're okay to go there?*

**A** Yeah, go for it.

*Q I know that you've have had a conviction, for what I incorrectly referred to as assault, but it was actually making a threat over a carriage service that you were convicted of, is that right?*

**A** Um, look, that doesn't play into it, it's well documented, so, moving on.

*Q Okay, well I think from the point of view of you running on a law and order platform, I think it's probably relevant...um, would you agree with that or not?*

**A** [Silence]