

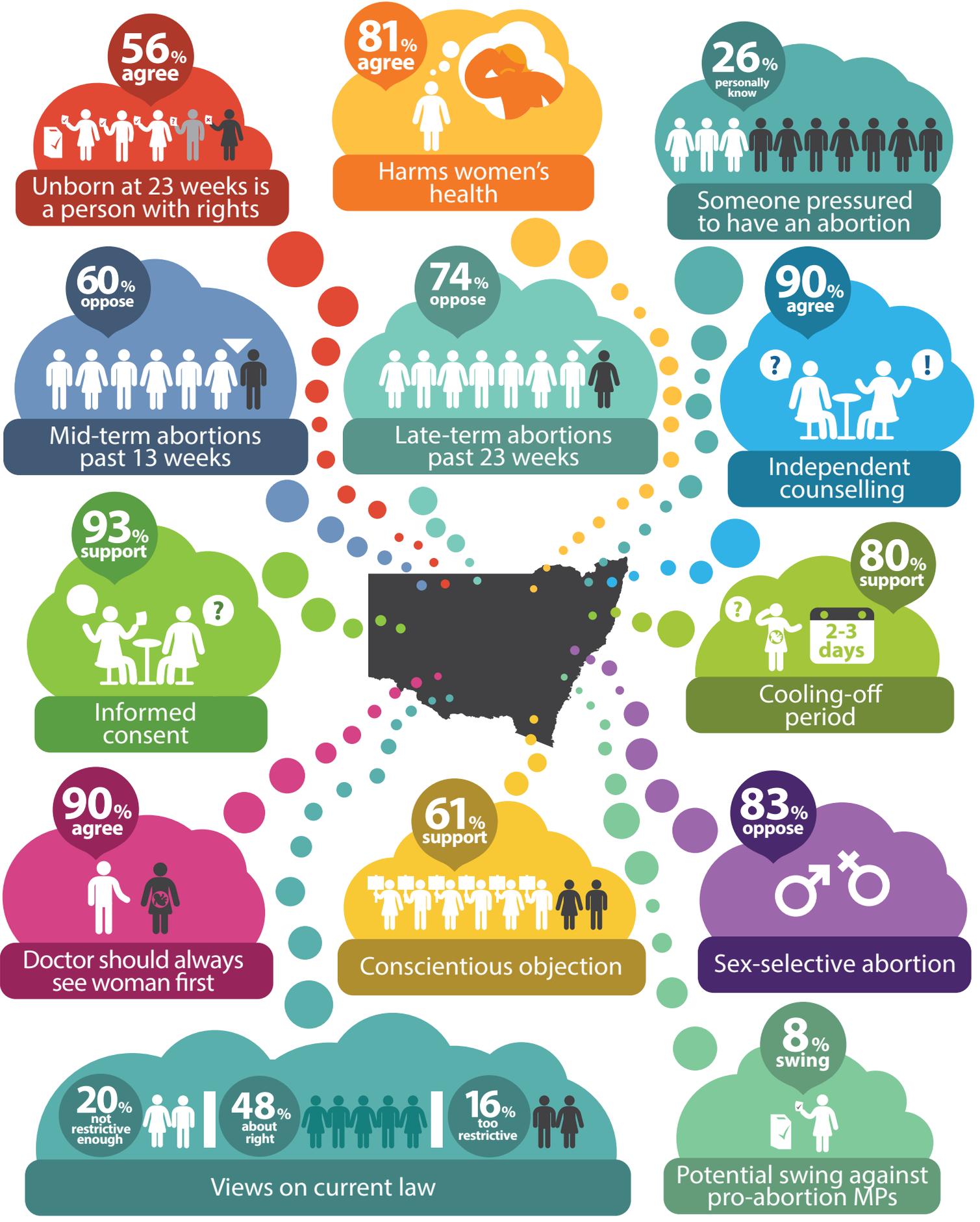
# What NSW Really Thinks About Abortion



Poll Results  
May 2017

# Executive Summary

A report on a comprehensive independent market research survey conducted by Galaxy Research, commissioned by Abortion Rethink. This randomised online opinion poll of 1,003 NSW voters was conducted from 26 to 30 April 2017, with 14 questions in total.



## Methodology

This online study for Abortion Rethink was conducted in New South Wales between Wednesday 26 April and Sunday 30 April 2017, among a sample of 1,003 respondents 18 years and older who are eligible to vote at elections.

This sample was selected randomly from Survey Sampling International's large permission-based consumer online panel.

The full questionnaire can be found at the back of this report. Galaxy Research transferred the questionnaire into Web Survey Creator in order for it to be hosted online.

For each question, the respondent had to click on the response which represented their answer.

With a sample of 1,003 respondents, we can be 95% confident that survey estimates are within +/- 3.1% of the results we would obtain if we surveyed everyone in the population.

Following the completion of interviewing, the data was weighted by age, gender and region to reflect the latest ABS population estimates for NSW.

### Sample Composition (unweighted)

Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50+	Sydney	Rest of NSW
1,003	500	503	262	274	467	611	392

For inquiries, please contact Galaxy Research on 02 9406 5800 or Abortion Rethink on 0411 293 655.

# Main Findings

## Rights of the unborn

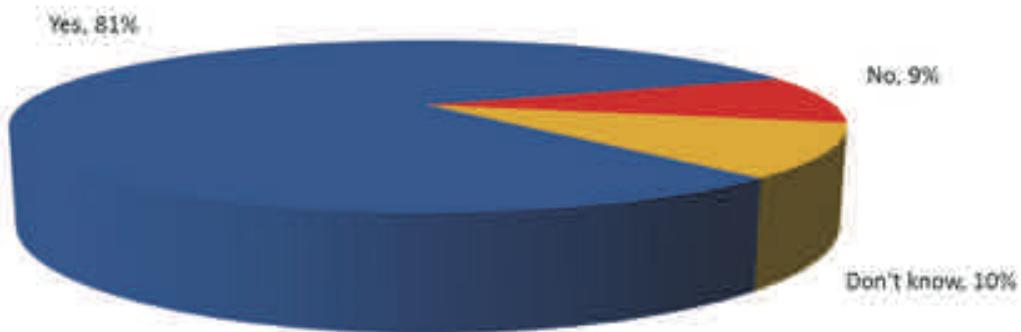
*A few questions now about abortion. Abortion is an operation or procedure which involves termination of an unwanted or difficult pregnancy, preventing birth of a live baby. At 23 weeks (5.3 months) of pregnancy an unborn baby has a reasonable chance of survival outside the womb. Do you believe that at that time an unborn baby is a person with human rights?*



Most voters in New South Wales (56%) believe that an unborn child at 23 weeks of pregnancy is a person with human rights. Those who agree are more than double those who disagree (24%). A significant proportion of voters (20%) is undecided. This view is most commonly held by women and 18 to 34-year-olds (both 60%).

## Risks to women

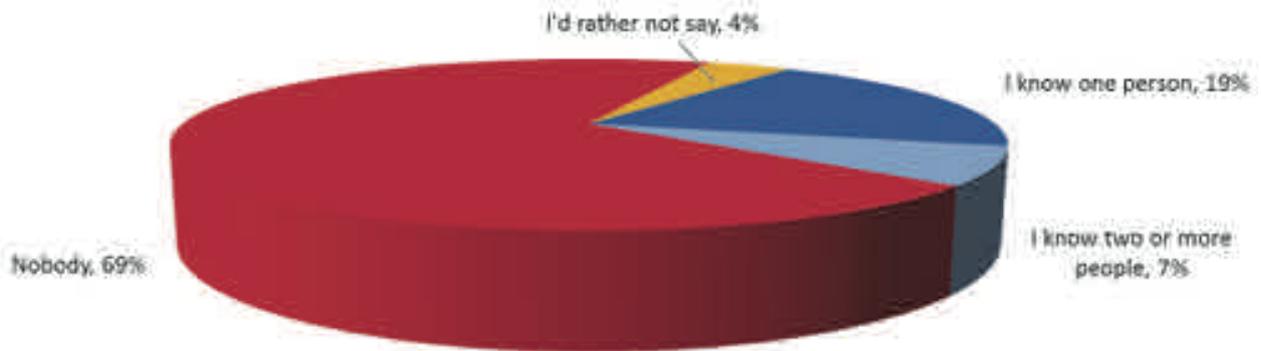
*Do you believe that abortion can harm the physical and/or mental health of a woman?*



It is widely accepted by 81% of NSW voters that abortion can harm the mental and/or physical health of a woman. Females (83%) and those aged 18-34 years (84%) are the most likely to have concerns about the harm done by abortion.

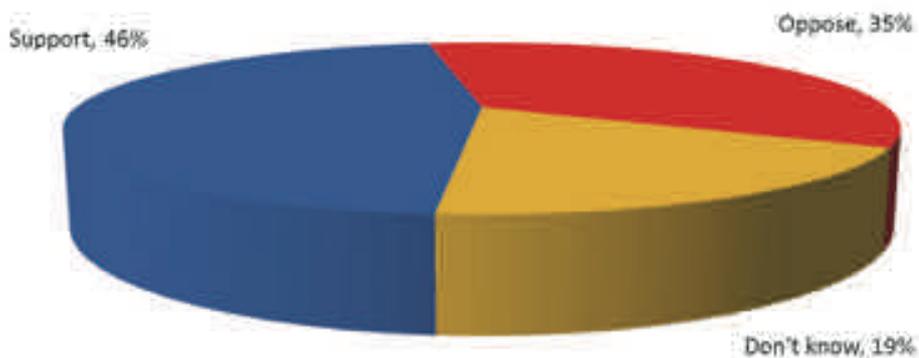
## ***Circumstances surrounding abortion***

***One factor that can be involved in a woman's decision to have an abortion is pressure from another person such as a partner. Do you personally know anyone who had an abortion where you believe that pressure from another person was a significant factor in their decision to have an abortion?***



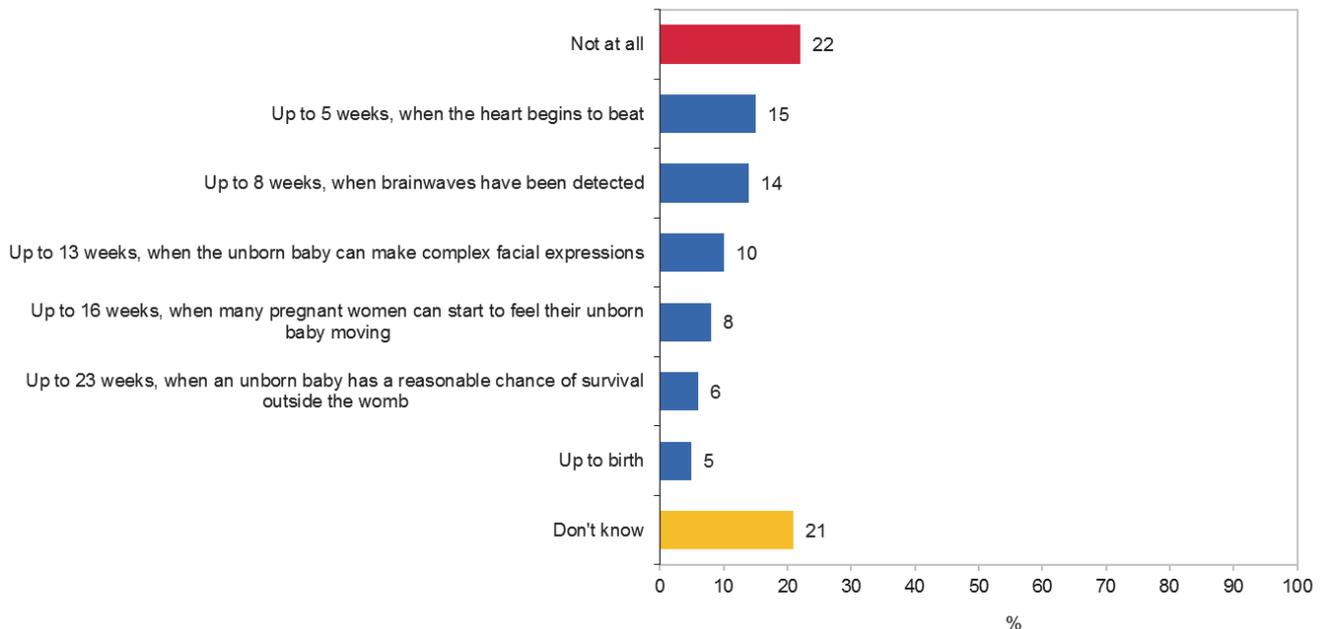
More than one-quarter (26%) of NSW voters personally know at least one woman who has been pressured to have an abortion. 19% know one woman and 7% know two or more women who have experienced coercion. 29% of females and 30% of 35 to 49-year-olds know at least one woman who was in this situation.

***Do you support or oppose abortion for non-medical reasons, in cases where a healthy mother is carrying a healthy unborn baby?***



More NSW voters (46%) support abortion for non-medical reasons than oppose (35%), but 19% are unsure – so there is no consensus on this question. This view is most commonly held by women (47%) and 18 to 34-year-olds (50%).

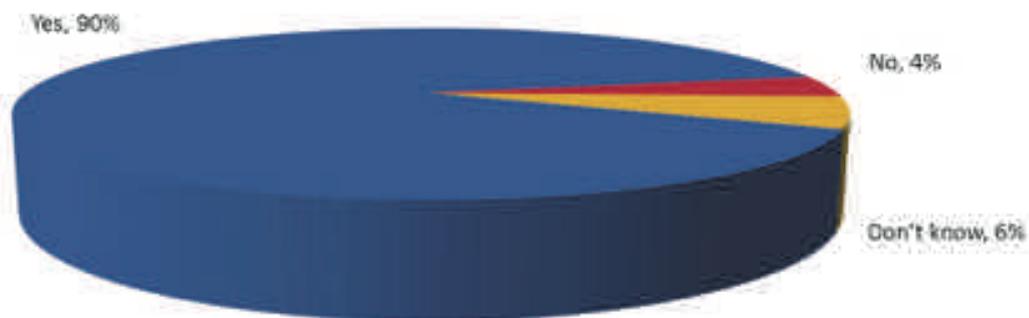
### ***Up to what stage of pregnancy do you believe abortion should be legal?***



Half of the voters in NSW would not allow abortion after 8 weeks of pregnancy. This includes 15% who would not allow abortion after 5 weeks and 22% opposed to abortion at any time. 60% of NSW voters would not allow abortion after 13 weeks, 68% after 16 weeks, and 74% after 23 weeks. Only 5% support abortion at any time until birth. Women are most supportive of early gestational limits on abortion, with 66% of females opposed to abortion after 13 weeks.

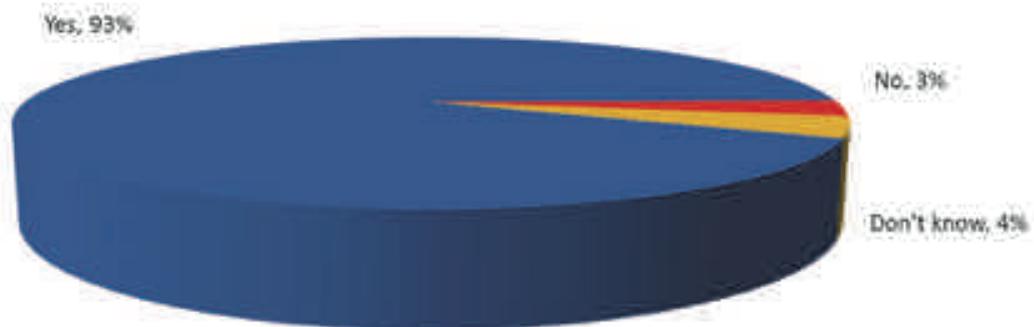
### ***Decision Making***

***Do you believe that when considering having an abortion, a woman should have the right to independent counselling from a source that has no financial interest in her decision, so that she can make a fully informed decision?***



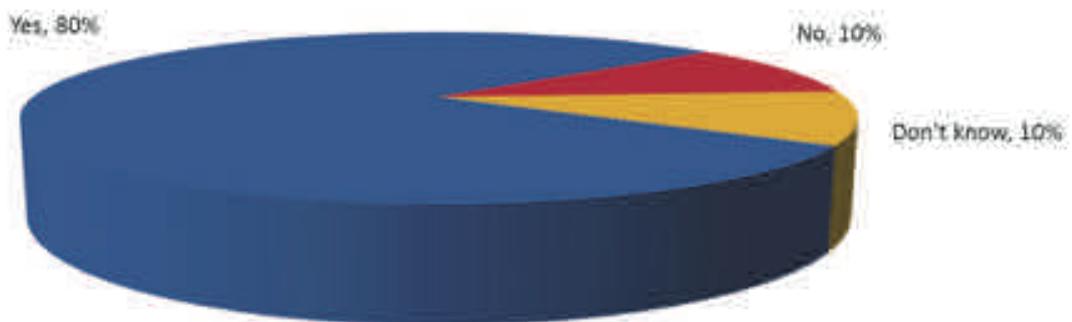
There is widespread belief in NSW (90%) that before having an abortion a woman should have the right to receive independent counselling so that she can make a fully informed decision. Only 4% disagree.

*Do you believe that a woman considering abortion should have the right to be informed of the physical and psychological risks associated with abortion and the support available should she wish to continue with the pregnancy?*



Almost everyone in NSW (93%) believes that women should have the right to be fully informed of the risks of abortion and the support available to continue with the pregnancy. Just 3% disagree.

*Do you believe there should be a cooling-off period of several days between making an appointment to have an abortion, and the actual procedure, to ensure that the woman is certain of her decision?*



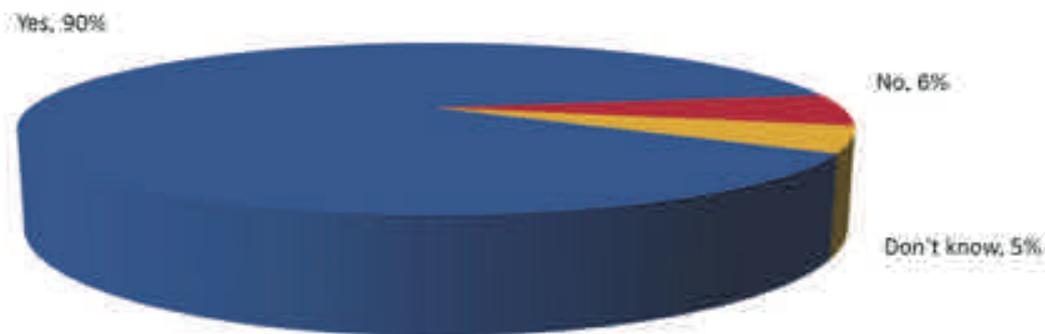
There is also strong support (80%) for a cooling-off period of several days between making an appointment for an abortion and the actual procedure. Only 10% disagree.

***Do you believe that parental consent should normally be required for girls under the age of 16 to have an abortion?***



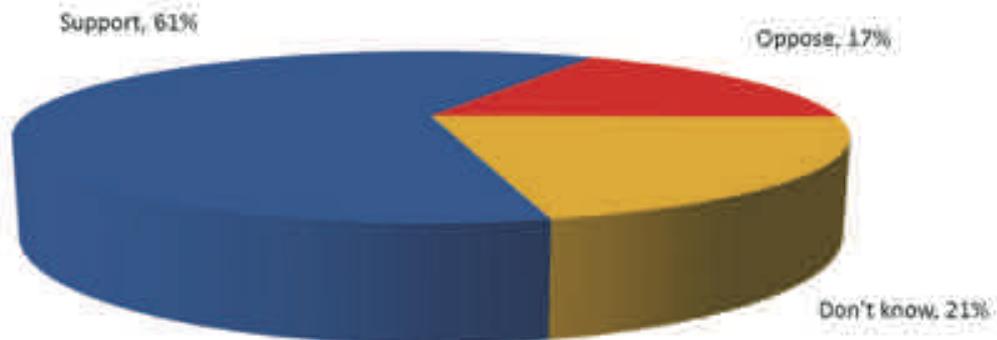
Almost two-thirds (65%) of NSW voters believe parental consent should normally be required for girls under the age of 16 to have an abortion. Support is strongest in the 50+ age group, with 70% agreement. Just 22% of all voters disagree.

***Do you believe that a woman requesting an abortion should always be seen in person by a qualified doctor?***



Almost all NSW voters (90%) agree that a woman requesting an abortion should always be seen by a doctor. Just 6% disagree.

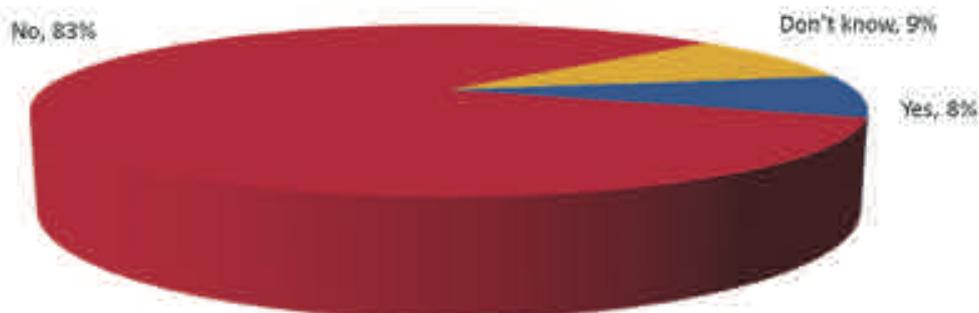
**Many doctors do not wish to perform or participate in abortion in any way, including having to direct a patient to another doctor or abortionist when they believe that is not in their patient's best interests. Do you support or oppose conscientious objection provisions to allow doctors and nurses to opt out of performing or participating in abortions against their will?**



Almost two-thirds (61%) of NSW voters support conscientious objection provisions allowing doctors and nurses to opt out of performing or participating in abortions. 17% are opposed, while 21% are unsure.

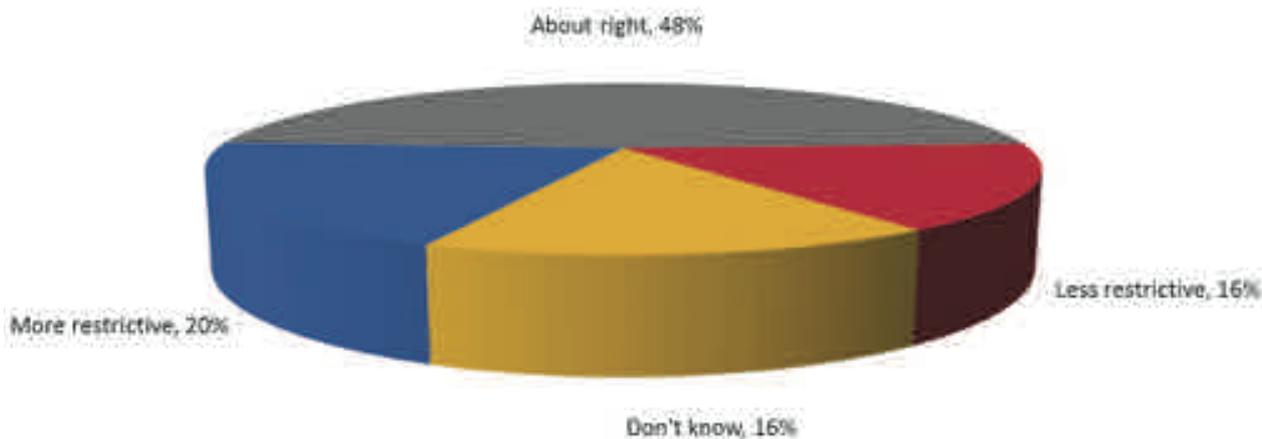
### **Legal Aspects**

**Sex-selective abortion is the practice of terminating a pregnancy based upon the sex of the unborn baby, usually when it is a girl. Sex-selective abortions are known to occur in Australia. Do you believe that aborting unborn babies solely because of their sex should be permitted in NSW?**



There is strong opposition to sex-selective abortion in NSW, with 83% of voters against this practice. Only 8% are in favour. Women (86%) and the 50+ age group (90%) are most opposed.

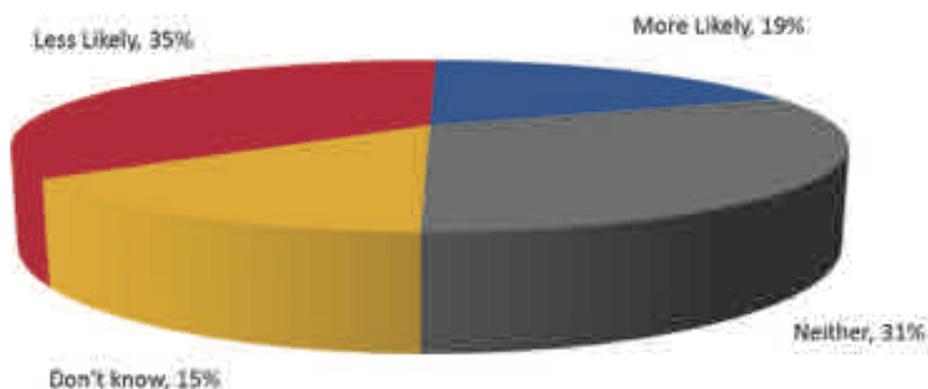
**Under the current law over 25,000 abortions are performed each year in New South Wales. Abortion is currently legal in cases where there is a serious danger to a woman's life, or physical or mental health. In regard to mental health the doctor may take into account the effects of economic or social stress and the potential for mental health problems after birth. Do you believe the law in NSW should be more restrictive, less restrictive or is it about right as it is?**



More than two-thirds (68%) of NSW voters are opposed to the law on abortion being made less restrictive. Almost half (48%) of NSW voters believe the law as it stands is “about right”, while 20% want the law to be tightened. 16% want the law to be less restrictive.

### **Voting intentions**

**If your local Member of State Parliament voted in favour of decriminalisation of abortion, which would allow abortion for any reason until birth, would you be less likely or more likely to vote for them at the next State election?**



More than one-third (35%) of NSW voters would be *less likely* to vote for their MP if he or she voted in Parliament for decriminalisation of abortion. 19% would be *more likely* to vote for their MP in that case, while 15% were unsure and 31% took the position that the issue would not influence their vote at the next State election. This suggests a potential average swing of 8% against MPs who would vote for decriminalisation of abortion.

# GALAXY RESEARCH

GALAXY JOB NO. 170417  
To be fielded no later than  
Sunday, 30 April 2017

QUESTIONNAIRE NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Please answer the following questions to see if you fall into the category of respondent we need to interview. You will need to provide a response for EVERY question to proceed with the interview

Please be assured of complete confidentiality. Galaxy Research is bound by the Market Research Society Privacy Principles.

During the survey, please do not use your browser's **FORWARD** and **BACK** buttons. Instead, please always use the buttons below to move backward and forward through the survey.

## Your honesty is valuable and really appreciated.

Galaxy Research appreciates that most people give honest answers in our surveys and we want to keep it that way. We encourage truthful answers by making our surveys easy to understand, easy to complete and short enough to keep you going.

1. To fill in all survey invitations to you, yourself
2. To read and follow all survey instructions and questions
3. To give due consideration to all your answers, and of course,
4. To always give honest and truthful answers

Galaxy Research monitors closely the data collected by participants in its panel surveys and has taken steps to detect any suspicious data.

We understand that you are most likely always honest and therefore we say thanks again and please keep responding to our surveys.

### **SECTION A – ASK ALL RESPONDENTS**

A1. Where do you live in Australia?

NSW - Sydney ..... 1  
NSW – Other ..... 2  
Elsewhere in Australia ..... 3

### **ASK IF LIVE IN NSW IE CODE 1-2. OTHERS TERMINATE WITH THANKS**

A2. How old are you?

17 years or under..... 01	45-49 years ..... 07
18-24 years ..... 02	50-54 years ..... 08
25-29 years ..... 03	55-59 years ..... 09
30-34 years ..... 04	60-64 years ..... 10
35-39 years ..... 05	65-69 years ..... 11
40-44 years ..... 06	70+ years ..... 12
	Rather not say ..... 13

### **ASK IF AGED 18 YEARS OR OLDER IE CODE 02-12 IN A2. CODE 01 AND 13 TERMINATE WITH THANKS**

A3. And are you male or female?

Male ..... 1  
Female ..... 2

A4. Can I just check, are you eligible to vote at elections?

Yes ..... 1 \* NS  
No ..... 2 # Term

**SECTION B - ASK IF ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IE CODE 1 IN A4. CODE 2 TERMINATE WITH THANKS**

- B1. A few questions now about abortion. Abortion is an operation or procedure which involves termination of an unwanted or difficult pregnancy, preventing birth of a live baby. At 23 weeks (5.3 months) of pregnancy an unborn baby has a reasonable chance of survival outside the womb. Do you believe that at that time an unborn baby is a person with human rights? Yes..... 1  
No ..... 2  
Don't know ..... 3
- B2. Do you believe that abortion can harm the physical and/or mental health of a woman? Yes..... 1  
No ..... 2  
Don't know ..... 3
- B3. One factor that can be involved in a woman's decision to have an abortion is pressure from another person such as a partner. Do you personally know anyone who had an abortion where you believe that pressure from another person was a significant factor in their decision to have the abortion? SR  
I know one person..... 1  
I know two or more people ..... 2  
Nobody..... 3  
I'd rather not say ..... 4
- Please select one option only**
- B4. Do you support or oppose abortion for non-medical reasons, in cases where a healthy mother is carrying a healthy unborn baby? SR  
Support..... 1  
Oppose..... 2  
Don't know..... 3
- Please select one option only**
- B5. Up to what stage of pregnancy do you believe abortion should be legal? SR  
Not at all..... 1  
Up to 5 weeks, when the heart begins to beat ..... 2  
Up to  
8 weeks, when brainwaves have been detected ..... 3  
Up to 13 weeks, when the unborn  
baby can make complex facial expressions ..... 4  
Up to 16 weeks, when many pregnant  
women can start to feel their unborn baby moving..... 5  
Up to 23 weeks, when an unborn baby has a  
reasonable chance of survival outside the womb..... 6  
Up to birth ..... 7  
Don't know ..... 8
- Please select one option only**
- B6. Do you believe that when considering having an abortion, a woman should have the right to independent counselling from a source that has no financial interest in her decision, so that she can make a fully informed decision? Yes ..... 1  
No..... 2  
Don't know..... 3
- B7. Do you believe that a woman considering abortion should have the right to be informed of the physical and psychological risks associated with abortion and the support available should she wish to continue with the pregnancy? Yes ..... 1  
No..... 2  
Don't know..... 3
- B8. Do you believe there should be a cooling-off period of several days between making an appointment to have an abortion, and the actual procedure, to ensure that the woman is certain of her decision? Yes ..... 1  
No..... 2  
Don't know..... 3
- B9. Do you believe that parental consent should normally be required for girls under the age of 16 to have an abortion? Yes ..... 1  
No..... 2  
Don't know..... 3
- B10. Do you believe that a woman requesting an abortion should always be seen in person by a qualified doctor? Yes ..... 1  
No..... 2  
Don't know..... 3

- B11. Many doctors do not wish to perform or participate in abortion in any way, including having to direct a patient to another doctor or abortionist when they believe that is not in their patient's best interests. Do you support or oppose conscientious objection provisions to allow doctors and nurses to opt out of performing or participating in abortions against their will? SR  
Support..... 1  
Oppose..... 2  
Don't know..... 3

**Please select one option only**

- B12. Sex selective abortion is the practice of terminating a pregnancy based upon the sex of the unborn baby, usually when it is a girl. Sex selective abortions are known to occur in Australia. Do you believe that aborting unborn babies solely because of their sex should be permitted in NSW? Yes ..... 1  
No..... 2  
Don't know..... 3

- B13. Under the current law over 25,000 abortions are performed each year in New South Wales. Abortion is currently legal in cases where there is a serious danger to a woman's life, or physical or mental health. In regard to mental health the doctor may take into account the effects of economic or social stress and the potential for mental health problems after birth. Do you believe the law in NSW should be more restrictive, less restrictive or is it about right as it is? SR  
More restrictive..... 1  
About right..... 2  
Less restrictive ..... 3  
Don't know ..... 4

**Please select one option only**

- B14. If your local Member of State Parliament voted in favour of decriminalisation of abortion, which would allow abortion for any reason until birth, would you be less likely or more likely to vote for them at the next State election? SR  
Less Likely..... 1  
More Likely ..... 2  
Neither..... 3  
Don't know..... 4

**Please select one option only**

**SECTION C – ASK ALL QUALIFYING RESPONDENTS**

- C1. Now, a few questions to ensure that we have interviewed a good cross-section of people. Do you work full time, part time or not at all? Full time ..... 1  
Part time ..... 2  
Not at all..... 3

- C2. Which of these best describes your current marital status? Never married..... 1  
Defacto or living together..... 2  
Married ..... 3  
Separated, Divorced or Widowed ..... 4

- C3. Which of these best describes the highest level of schooling you have completed? Below Year 12..... 1  
Completed Year 12 ..... 2  
Don't know/ Refused .... 3

- C4. Into which of these categories does your **total** household income fall before tax? Under \$30,000 ..... 1  
\$30,000 - \$49,999 ..... 2  
\$50,000 - \$69,999 ..... 3  
\$70,000 - \$99,999 ..... 4  
\$100,000 or more..... 5  
Prefer not to say ..... 6

Those are all of the questions. Thank you for your time and participation.



Hearing all voices. Exploring all choices.

[www.abortionrethink.org](http://www.abortionrethink.org)



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