



## Drop the abortion charges!

# Campaign gathers national momentum

### Abortion rights rally in Sydney

On May 29 abortion rights supporters took to the streets of Sydney to demand the dropping of the abortion charges against the couple in Cairns. Over 150 people braved the rainy weather, including contingents from Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and even New Zealand. The rally was organised by the Women's Abortion Action Campaign (WAAC) and was chaired by WAAC activist, Margaret Kirkby. Speakers included Eurydice Aroney from Pro-Choice NSW, Kathy Newnam from the Brisbane Pro-Choice Action Collective, Lee Rhiannon from the NSW Greens, Gabe Kavanaugh from the "F" Conference Collective and Debbie Brennan from Radical Women in Melbourne.



**The abortion charges that have been brought against the couple in Cairns represents the most serious attack on abortion rights for decades. The Pro-Choice Action Collective has speakers available to talk about the case and how you can support the growing national campaign. If you can organise a meeting in your local area or with your organisation or trade union please get in contact.**

### Sydney Feminism Conferences supports abortion rights campaign

On April 10-11, the first feminist conference to be held in Sydney in more than 10 years attracted more than 550 people. The "F" Conference was organised to re-ignite feminist organising in Sydney, though there were many participants from other cities also. There was a tangible enthusiasm and excitement evident throughout the conference — reflecting the gap that has arisen in the last decade between the support for feminism and the decline of grass-roots organising.

The sentiment for action was reflected in the strong support for the abortion rights campaign and particularly the campaign against the charges brought against a Cairns couple under Queensland's anti-abortion laws. Two workshops about the campaign were organised as part of the conference by a national network of abortion activists comprising the Women's Abortion Action Campaign (NSW), Pro-Choice Action Collective (Qld) and Radical Women (Vic).

The conference passed a motion in support of the campaign for free, safe, accessible abortion on demand and called for the immediate dropping of the charges against the Cairns couple, rejecting the Queensland government's lies and distractions in relation to the case.

The conference also supported the upcoming protests as part of the campaign, including the National Day of Action on the Saturday before the Cairns case goes to trial; the convergence on Cairns being organised by the Pro-Choice Action Collective for the days the trial is held; and the national rally for abortion rights held in Sydney on May 29.



## Pro-choice contingent at Labour Day

Barriers to reproductive rights are barriers to full social, economic and political equality. The trade union movement has played a key role in defending women’s rights to abortion when they have come under attack in the past. The Pro-Choice Action Collective organised a contingent in this year's Labour Day march to highlight this history and to build support for the ongoing campaign for abortion rights.



The Women's Action Campaign banner that was funded by the unions during the campaign in the late 1980's. There were lots of cheers and applause for the banner as the march went by.

The Pro-Choice Action Collective held an information stall at the showgrounds after the march and received much support for the campaign.

## Abortion is a union issue



### “Pro-Choice or No Choice” benefit gig

Around 100 people attended the “Pro-Choice or No Choice” benefit gig at The Globe on April 17.

Thanks to all the awesome artists who volunteered their time and energies - Anarchist Duck, Girl with Cake (pictured below), Ofa Fanaika, Pear and the Awkward Orchestra and Eden Must Burn.

**The Pro-Choice Action Collective needs your help to raise funds. If you can help by making a donation, performing at a gig or by helping to organising a fundraiser, please get in contact.**





## Reports from protests against the anti-abortion bigots:

### Back to the backyard? NO WAY!

March 13 - A very lively protest was held today against an anti-abortion rally in town. There was about 70 of us over the four hour protest. Everyone kept chanting and speaking out for duration of the protest, even as the massive PA at the anti-abortion rally tried to drown us out with their Christian rock band. Lots of hoarse voices!

We spoke out against the abortion charges against the Cairns couple. We spoke out against the attacks on our rights to access abortion. We stood in solidarity with our sisters here and around the world who cannot access safe abortion. Usually we hold a minute silence to remember our sisters who have died because they could not access safe abortion - but in the face of the bigotry from the anti-abortion rally, we held a minutes noise instead. Loud.

Quite a few people joined in the protest. We resisted. We were loud. We were determined. **Not the church, not the state - women will decide their fate.**



## "Right to life, your name's a lie- you don't care if women die"



### Sowing the seeds for a future of choice

By Kieran Salsone

May 8 - When I was a kid my mother took me to a Labor Party function. The term 'rusted on supporter' was coined to describe my family, so my younger self had no idea why we had to push through ranks of angry student protesters to get inside. I was too young to understand they were protesting Keating's mishandling of East Timor, but the memory of those students gave me the resolve to leave the party fifteen years later. It was okay to jump from my family's ship; a whole platoon of protesters agreed with me.

So when the Pro-Lifers dragged their children out to demonstrate against abortion, the Pro-Choice Action Collective (PCAC) were there to show that imprisoning women in sexist legislation is not okay.

Chloe from PCAC took me through the history of these clashes. "Every year we come here because every year on mother's day the organisation Cherish Life come and have a big old protest and try and push abortion laws back further than they already are."

"It just seems more like they're trying to force Christian morals on people instead of genuinely caring for them. They don't seem to care about what happens to the baby once it is born."

Are we headed for a future were cynicism, that deep mistrust of everyone around us, makes us legislate against making choices in the off chance we might hold regrets?

I don't think so. As long as there're groups like PCAC still agitating, still raising banners that keep the voice of choice alive, there'll be kids like me growing up knowing their parents aren't simply right by default.

Even if apathy's become the national sport, there's still a lot of passion here. The space between the two groups remembered all the tension and ideological friction that scraped and sparked the sixties, even if the world past the banners seems to forget. We need to cure the passion fatigue, and it'll be people like Chloe that keep the embers burning, waiting for us to wake up.



# PRO- CHOICE ACTION COLLECTIVE

**Now more than ever we need to build a strong campaign that can defend the rights that have been won through the struggles of the past. We need to build a movement that can resist the attacks on our rights and fight for free, safe and accessible abortion on demand.**

**The Pro-Choice Action Collective meets every Monday at 6:30pm in the TLC Building (2nd floor), 16 Peel St, South Brisbane. All supporters of abortion rights are welcome to attend the organising meetings to help plan the campaign.**

**Don't just get angry:  
GET ACTIVE:  
join the campaign!**



**Drop the abortion charges! Repeal all anti-abortion laws!  
For free, safe, accessible abortion on demand!**

**For more information:**

**Phone: 0400 720 757 (Kathy), 0422 763 225 (Emma)**

**Email: [prochoiceaction@gmail.com](mailto:prochoiceaction@gmail.com)**

**Facebook group: Pro-Choice Action Collective  
[www.prochoiceactionqld.org](http://www.prochoiceactionqld.org)**

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