



# Queensland election: Bravehearts founder Hetty Johnston to run as independent

By Ashleigh Stevenson

Updated Wed 1 Nov 2017, 2:03pm

**Child protection advocate Hetty Johnston has announced she will run as an independent in the election, saying she is committed to making Queensland the safest state to raise a child.**

The Bravehearts founder will contest the newly created Beenleigh-based seat of Macalister, south of Brisbane.

Ms Johnston said while her priority was child protection, she was not an one-issue candidate.

"That [child safety] is my main goal but certainly not my only goal," Ms Johnston said.

"I've got a very strong and very proud background in business and I want to help with the small business community around here.

"Of course political transparency is one of the key drivers — it's actually the thing that tipped me over the line to say: 'yes, I'm going to do this'."

Ms Johnston will face off against LNP candidate Judi Van Manen, Labor's Melissa McMahon and Greens candidate Gabi Nehring.

She said both major parties had repeatedly let the public down.

"I think that our political system is totally broken — it doesn't work, it doesn't work for the people — it works for the party and the people that fund the party," Ms Johnston said.

"I've been living around here for over 30 years and I've watched them all come and go, I've watched the lies come and go, I've watched the promises come and go, and I'm sick of it — enough is enough.

"I want to stand up for the people and make sure the people have a strong voice for them 365 days a year, every year, every day, not just election day."

In December 2015, Ms Johnston was running as a Logan mayoral candidate, but withdrew from the local government election campaign to care for her mother who was ill at the time.

"My mother was unwell and my family came first," Ms Johnston said.

"I did look at the job ahead — it's a big job — the mayoral job, and looked at my mother and thought it was the wrong time.

"Mum has recovered thankfully and she's very well at the moment and so is my father and they've given me their blessing."

Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said she had great respect for Ms Johnston.

"Hetty and I have had a lot of good conversations about child safety and our reforms," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"She was involved in our recent review of our child safety system, but we have a very strong Labor candidate down there in Melissa and of course I know that she is the best person to deliver for me."

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11/1/2018

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*First posted Wed 1 Nov 2017, 1:47pm*

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