

DEFENDING MARRIAGE

Statement about Labor's position on same-sex 'marriage'

This is a Supplementary Statement to the document

'Supporting statements for the '2010 Australian Christian Values Checklist'

In the **Australian Christian Values Checklist** (federal election 2010), Question 9 relates to the question of marriage and same-sex 'marriage':

9. Preserve marriage - Oppose same-sex marriage

This Statement has been published by the *Australian Christian Values Institute*.

Prepared by Salt Shakers (www.saltshakers.org.au) and the Australian Christian Values Institute (<http://www.christianvalues.org.au/>)

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The ten team members of the Australian Christian Values Checklist team are unanimous in their belief that the Australian Labor Party under Julia Gillard's leadership could well introduce homosexual marriage in the next parliament should they get back into government – despite their official stance at present to say they don't support same-sex 'marriage'.

Hence the decision was made to give the Labor Party a 'cross with a question mark' with regard to the question on opposing same-sex 'marriage'.

Homosexual marriage could result from a number of scenarios: through a change in official Labor Party policy at the next National Conference; through the deliberations and decisions of a Labor Cabinet and caucus or through the influence of the Greens – either through a private Members Bill with a conscience vote or through a balance of power agreement with Labor. Many commentators are predicting that the Greens will hold the balance of power in the Senate after the next election which will give them enormous influence over the next government; this is especially significant given the preference deal that has been done between Labor and the Greens.

The following material was taken into account in coming to this position:

1. Change in the Labor Party platform - 2009

At the Labor Party's national conference in 2009, the policy regarding marriage was changed. Up until then the platform referred to marriage being between a man and a woman.

The previous Platform said, in referring to the recognition of homosexual relationships, that Labor would support relationship registers but

“Not create schemes that mimic marriage or undermine existing laws that define marriage as being between a man and a woman.”

2007 ALP National Platform, Ch 13, No 16.

Included in 2007 Checklist Statements

http://www.saltshakers.org.au/images/stories/attachments/236_435378_ISSUES_-_POLITICS_-_FEDE.pdf

As a result of lobbying from homosexual lobby groups and some sections of the Labor Party (including Rainbow Labor) there was a move to get the ALP to accept same-sex 'marriage' at their 2009 National Conference.

See media report prior to the conference:

<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/lifematters/pm-faces-stoush-over-gay-marriage-20090713-ditp.html>

Largely due to the influence of then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, this was defeated.

See <http://www.smh.com.au/national/rudd-presses-labor-not-to-bless-gay-marriages-20090729-e1m5.html>

However the Platform **was changed** at the Conference to remove the reference to man and woman – the new policy now just refers to marriage as in the "Marriage Act".

At the time some mention was made of tradition, culture and community opinion being reasons for not accepting same-sex 'marriage' – but as those change the Marriage Act could well be changed.

The current ALP Platform (Ch 7, Page 16, Sections 140-142) first refers to the recognition of relationships and then goes on to marriage:

"Labor will take action to ensure the development of a nationally consistent framework that provides:

- * The opportunity for all couples who have a mutual commitment to a shared life to have their relationship officially recognised

- * Equal rights for all couples in federal and state laws.

Labor will review relationship recognition arrangements to ensure national consistency.

These reforms are to be implemented consistently with Labor's commitment to maintaining the definition of marriage as currently set out in the Marriage Act."

2. Vote at Victorian and Tasmanian state conferences

During 2009 the ALP state conferences in Victoria and Tasmania both voted to approve and support same-sex 'marriage'.

Tasmanian conference vote: <http://www.examiner.com.au/news/local/news/politics/alp-conference-supports-gays-marriage/1578207.aspx?FORM=ZZNR2>

Victorian conference vote:

<http://www.samesame.com.au/news/local/4818/Vic-Labor-Votes-For-Same-Sex-Marriage.htm>

3. Greens calling for a conscience vote on same-sex 'marriage'

Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young put up a private Senator's Bill proposing the legalisation of same-sex marriage during the last parliament. Although it was not voted on during the last parliament it is likely that the Greens will pursue such legislation if a Labor government is re-elected.

In November 2009 Senator Hanson-Young called on the Labor government to allow a conscience vote on the issue:

See report at <http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/928622/greens-challenge-rudd-on-gay-marriage>

If the Greens hold the balance of power in the Senate this issue could be used as a bargaining tool with a Labor government as a trade-off for their support for other legislation.

4. Julia Gillard's statements on same-sex 'marriage'

When Julia Gillard was recently asked about same-sex 'marriage' in an interview on Austereo radio, she responded saying that Labor Party policy on marriage recognises it is between a man and a woman (that isn't actually Labor policy as seen in Point 1!).

When asked about her OWN view, she said "**Look, that is my view, I think that's where we're at as a community now, and I think it's appropriate that for these very sensitive issues that we're reflecting community views.**"

See <http://www.samesame.com.au/news/local/5572/Gillard-says-no-to-gay-marriage.htm>

This wasn't a response that said she opposed same-sex 'marriage' out of principle – she doesn't say it is morally wrong. Rather the response reflected a pragmatic approach, relying on community opinion. If community opinion or Labor policy were to change then this response could easily lead to the endorsement of same-sex 'marriage'.

5. Penny Wong's responses on same-sex 'marriage'

As an open lesbian and Labor Cabinet Minister, Senator Penny Wong is regularly asked about her position on same-sex 'marriage'. She has generally supported the current Labor policy and referred to 'cultural' reasons. She has not said she opposes the principle of same-sex 'marriage'.

Two recent examples of this:

On July 25, 2010 Penny Wong told Channel Ten that "On the issue of marriage, I think the reality is there is a cultural, religious and historical view around that which we have to respect."

This caused various homosexual lobby groups to loudly protest about her statement.

See <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/gays-call-wong-a-hypocrite/story-fn59niix-1225896770041>

Senator Penny Wong was on Q and A on Monday July 26, 2010.

She was asked about the Labor Party's and her own position on same-sex 'marriage'.

She replied that they had done a lot to remove discrimination: "On the issue of, I suppose, reform, there are a number of us in the party - Anthony Albanese, Tanya, others, who have worked very hard to try and improve the parties position and policies on gay and lesbian Australians ... you've seen progressive improvements, modernisation in the Labor Party's platform and at the last election we went to the election with the most comprehensive set of law reform in relation to gay and lesbian rights that the country has ever seen and we have delivered them all."

"Now, I accept that you and some other people in the community would like us to have a different position in terms of marriage. That isn't the position in the party but what I would say to you is do take a moment to consider what we have tried to do, what we have advocated for and what we have delivered for gay and lesbian Australians."

She also noted that she was part of the Labor Party and "I have a view that you join a team, you're part of the team and that's the way, you know, we operate."

Read transcript at <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s2958214.htm>

Graham Richardson (former ALP Member) defended her, and noted that they will eventually get the numbers...

He said "Look, I'm amazed somewhat by these questions, really. You would not have had many of the things that have now happened that she's already referred to if people like Penny weren't in the Labor Party and weren't pushing for them. There are a lot of people in the Labor Party who don't agree with this stuff. At the moment there's nowhere near a majority but there will be. There will be over time because Penny will work for it and it will get up in the end. But give her a break, for God's sake. She's part of a caucus. There's a whole lot of them. She doesn't run the government; she's a part of it. A part of it. There's a think called cabinet solidarity... ..and if she wants to break it she gets nowhere. You'll lose someone who fights for your cause. That, my friends, is dumb. Big time dumb."

6. Labor candidates openly supporting same-sex marriage

Three Labor candidates, one in a safe Labor seat, have openly said that they support same-sex 'marriage'. See report at <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/labor-candidates-support-gay-marriage/story-e6frf7jx-1225897670971>

7. Analysis of the federal Labor Cabinet on same-sex 'marriage'

Ryan Heath, a homosexual activist and author of the 'gay marriage blog' has recently analysed the views of all the Labor Cabinet members (including possible future members) on this issue.

He assesses the situation as "Definite yes: 6; Probable yes: 5; Swinging: 3; Probable no: 7; Definite no: 0" giving:

"TOTAL LEANING YES: 11 - SWING: 3 - TOTAL LEANING NO: 7

He concludes that there is probable Cabinet support for same-sex marriage in a future Labor government. See <http://www.thegaymarriageblog.com/2010/07/how-would-labor-cabinet-vote-on-gay-marriage-in-australia/>

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