

Australian Christian Lobby federal election 2016 policy questionnaire to political parties

RESPONSE FOR AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS

CHILDREN

1. In response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, will your party commit to supporting a national redress scheme that is funded by institutions, but operated independently, for victims of child sexual abuse?

Yes, unless a better solution is proposed – perhaps one that shares responsibility between govt. and institutions.

2. Will your party commit to a national scheme for conducting background checks and registration of people working with children and other vulnerable people?

Unconditionally yes.

3. Exposure of children and young people to pornography in Australia has reached critical levels. Pornography is having widespread and measurable negative consequences on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children and young people. Due to this being a double-dissolution election, a Senate inquiry into the harms of pornography on children has been discontinued. Will your party commit re-establish this inquiry?

Unconditionally yes.

4. A recent House of Representatives inquiry into the regulatory and legislative aspects of international and domestic surrogacy arrangements recommended that the practice of commercial surrogacy remain prohibited in Australia. This recommendation was informed by the view that, even with the best of regulatory intentions, there is still significant potential for the exploitation of women and children. Will your party commit to encouraging the States to uphold the ban on commercial surrogacy in Australia?

Yes, and we will continue to monitor the discussion.

5. The Safe Schools Coalition relies heavily on research from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe. Questions about the compliance of ARCSHS research with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines have been raised along with widespread community concern about its promotion of gender fluidity theory through the so-called "Safe Schools" Coalition. Will your party commit to a Senate inquiry into the methodology, research, and staffing of ARCSHS at La Trobe?

Unconditionally yes.

6. No child should be bullied for any reason at school. Statements from the creator of the Safe Schools Coalition (SSCA) assert that the program is "not about bullying".

SSCA introduces children to contested gender theory, teaching children that their gender is fluid, and aims to change school policy on toilets to allow children to enter the toilet opposite to their biological sex if they claim a different identity. The Education Minister has stated that official resources of SSCA will be housed on the official Australian Government Safe Schools Hub website. Will your party commit to removing any SSCA material that promotes or endorses contested gender theory from Commonwealth funded websites?

Unconditionally yes.

7. Will your party commit to removing all support and funding for school programs that teach children that their gender is fluid?

Unconditionally yes.

8. School chaplaincy has been supported by both the Coalition and Labor parties since 2006. Chaplains do important and vital work supporting children and young people in schools across Australia. More than 1 million school students and their families depend on their chaplain for social, emotional and spiritual support. Will your party commit to extending the funding of chaplaincy when the current round of funding expires in 2018?

Unconditionally yes.

PERSECUTED MINORITIES AND REFUGEES

9. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, the US State Department, the European Parliament and the British Parliament's House of Commons have all recently made statements or resolutions condemning IS/ISIS/ISIL/Daesh as guilty of the genocide of Christians and other religious minorities. Will your party commit to a declaration in parliament that the killings of Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria constitute genocide?

Unconditionally yes.

10. Australia is one of 189 countries that adopted the Millennium Declaration and committed to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. The past few years have seen both sides of politics cut Australia's overseas aid program. Will your party commit to rebuilding the program and to reaching the Millennium Development Goal promise of 0.7% of Australia's gross national income?

Yes. We support the ideal of generous support of international aid, and hope that we might be able to exceed the Millennium Development Goals.

11. Australia's existing humanitarian intake for 2015-16 was 13,750 with an additional one-off 12,000 places for refugees fleeing Syria. Will your party commit to a doubling of the annual humanitarian intake with a weighting given to those in most need such as persecuted religious minorities?

Yes, we support the principle of increasing our refugee and immigration intake. We also support special priority being given to persecuted minorities especially Christian families and unattended children.

12. Is your party satisfied with the current approach of Australia towards persons seeking asylum who arrive by boat? Can your party offer any measures which would improve the current arrangements?

The boats have to be stopped to save lives and to manage our borders properly, but more should be done to process refugees in a timely fashion. We would support a blanket commitment to provide the resources so that processing of refugee applications should be completed within 6 months, and we support a plan to help integrate refugees and migrants through connecting them to community groups and churches.

INDIGENOUS

13. Is your party committed to constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

No. The indigenous people with whom we have consulted do not necessarily support constitutional recognition. Many would prefer a treaty. We support a careful examination of the underlying causes for welfare dependency, hopelessness and low self-esteem in the indigenous community. A simplistic constitutional response risks achieving no more lasting benefit than the “sorry” statements, and it entrenches the concept that indigenous Australians are separated from other Australians. Constitutional recognition may be no more than another band-aid which does nothing to address the needs in the Aboriginal and Islander communities.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

14. Religious exemptions or exceptions in anti-discrimination law act as protections for the fundamental right to religious freedom, for example, they allow Christian ministries and schools the freedom to employ staff who have a commitment to the religious views and mission of the organisation. Whilst religious freedom is currently protected by exemptions, religious freedom should not be considered as a concession, or some kind of special pleading. The Australian Law Reform Commission report Traditional Rights and Freedoms—Encroachments by Commonwealth Laws, states that in future reforms “further consideration should be given to whether freedom of religion should be protected through a general limitations clause rather than exemptions.” There have been calls by some groups, who are unhappy with religious exemptions to antidiscrimination law, to change the law and remove the protections for religious freedom.

- a) Will your party commit to ensuring the current religious protections afforded by exemptions remain in place, despite calls by some special interest groups for their removal?

Unconditionally yes.

- b) Should further reform of anti-discrimination law occur, will your party support a general limitations clause that would replace the current exemptions and remove the incorrect perception that religious freedom is an exception to other human rights?

Unconditionally yes.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

15. Marriage is a bedrock institution for society and redefining marriage has consequences. Will your Party guarantee that a peoples' vote on redefining marriage will take place and that there will be no changes to the Marriage Act until the Australian people have cast their votes in a national ballot?

Our preference is that the Marriage Act remains as it is, without any plebiscite or referendum. Furthermore, we would seek to formally cement the current definition of marriage into the Constitution so that this discussion is not repeated each generation. A people's vote is the lesser of two remaining evils. The government must not be permitted to change the definition of marriage without consultation; hence a people's vote is better than unilateral government action. However, the definition of marriage has not changed for thousands of years and should not be changed now, even with a majority opinion in today's society.

16. Redefining marriage in law activates State-based anti-discrimination laws, creating legal vulnerabilities for people who disagree (including those who are not clergy). Activists have used provisions of State-based anti-discrimination laws to report those with a different view to government commissions. Will your party commit to work with the States to ensure freedom of speech, conscience and religion is not inhibited should the Marriage Act ever be changed?

Unconditionally yes.

17. A single-income household (with income of \$120,000) pays around \$10,000 more tax in Australia than a double income family with the same joint income of \$120,000. In a submission to the Commonwealth Government discussion paper on taxation, Queensland Senator Matt Canavan recommended a limited form of income-splitting to redress this inequity. Will your party provide families the option of income splitting so that parents who work in the home are not disadvantaged?

Unconditionally yes.

18. The Advertising Standards Bureau administers a national system of advertising self-regulation. The self-regulatory system has failed to protect women and children from objectification and sexualisation portrayed through outdoor and shopfront advertising. Will your party commit to a full review of the current self-regulatory system, and additionally commit to introducing meaningful fines for advertisers who breach the standards?

Unconditionally yes.

ADDICTION

19. Will your party commit to banning donations to political parties from the gambling industry and associated entities?

Unconditionally yes.

20. Will your party commit to banning sports betting advertising and commentary during sports broadcasts?

Unconditionally yes.

21. Given the proven harm of poker machines, will your party implement the recommendation of the Productivity Commission and mandate \$1 bets?

Unconditionally yes.

22. Drugs such as ICE are wreaking havoc in our communities. Some groups advocate an approach that would see the individual use of illegal drugs falling outside the criminal framework by applying a system of civil sanctions for personal use of illicit drugs. Does your party support the continuation of criminal offences for users of illicit drugs?

Unconditionally yes.

PRAYER IN PARLIAMENT

23. Australia's western, liberal democracy and Westminster System owes much to its Christian cultural to continue opening parliament each day exclusively with the Lord's Prayer?

Unconditionally yes.

LIFE

24. A series of recent Galaxy Polls have revealed majority opposition to late term abortion in Australia. The recent polling is consistent with the findings of earlier more comprehensive research by the Southern Cross Bioethics Institute. Given that babies are viable outside the womb from 24 weeks of pregnancy, will your party commit to removing Medicare funding for Late Term Abortion in situations where there is a healthy mother and healthy baby?

Unconditionally yes.

25. Planned Parenthood in America has been caught out trafficking organs of aborted babies for profit. In response, the US Congress voted to defund Planned Parenthood. Australia, through our overseas aid program, grants money to International Planned Parenthood. Will your party commit to removing Commonwealth funding of International Planned Parenthood?

Unconditionally yes.

26. Will your party commit to increasing support for palliative care and protect the vulnerable by opposing moves to introduce euthanasia?

Unconditionally yes.

RESPONSE FOR AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS, by Lindsay Cameron 9/6/2016