

Australian Christian Lobby federal election 2016 policy questionnaire to political parties

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. The DLP has already stated its commitment to justice for the victims of child sexual abuse. A national redress scheme operated by an independent body is the only system that would be seen as fair and unbiased by the Australian people.

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

Absolutely. Anyone who intends to pursue a career involving contact with children, the disabled and other vulnerable people should understand and expect that a thorough background check is a necessary and a mandatory step for them to undertake. Provided adequate privacy provisions of personal information are put in place to ensure information gathered during a background check is not released publicly there should be no objection.

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?

Yes. The DLP assisted with the wording of the terms of reference for the senate inquiry introduced by Senators Bullock and Back.

Pornography is insidious by its very nature and corrupts many young minds and comes at a great social cost now and in the future. The ease with which it is accessible on the internet should alarm every right thinking person.

The DLP is committed to seeing this much needed inquiry carried out.

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?

Definitely. The DLP has a policy completely opposing surrogacy and has spoken out against it on many occasions.

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?

Yes. The Victorian DLP MP Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins introduced a motion into the Victorian Parliament on June 21st 2016 calling for the Victorian Government to cease all funding for the Safe Schools program and to replace it with educational programs that have been designed to prevent bullying and are scientifically proven and free from ideological bias.

That bias has been demonstrated by members of ARCSHS and a thorough inquiry should be undertaken.

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?

As stated in the previous answer the DLP seeks the complete removal of the Safe Schools program, including all materials whether hardcopy of electronic, and replacing the program with educational programs that have been designed to prevent bullying and are scientifically proven and free from ideological bias.

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

The DLP has already introduced a motion into the Victorian parliament calling for all funding to be withdrawn for the Safe Schools program and for the program to be replaced. We would do the same in the Federal Parliament.

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?

Yes. School students have been inundated by programs and curriculums that promote 'alternative' lifestyles and cause confusion and anxiety. The DLP believes the availability of Chaplains in schools has gone a long way to alleviating much of that anxiety and confusion. The chaplaincy program has been a great success and should be extended indefinitely.

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?

Yes. On 21st June 2016 the DLP introduced a motion into the Victorian Parliament condemning the oppression, murder, torture and other crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Indonesian government and military against the West Papuan people. We also find that the crimes being committed against the Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria are tantamount to genocide and must be condemned. The DLP will commit to making such a declaration in Federal Parliament.

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?

The DLP believes Australia is a prosperous and generous nation and we must do all we can to assist the needy in our region and across the world. However, we believe that Australian foreign aid has not always been directed to the places where it is most needed. An example is the tripling of Australian aid to Indonesia over the past decade at a time when the Indonesian government has more than tripled its spending on its military.

Australian Aid is vital to the wellbeing of many people across the world and the DLP would like to see much more transparency and public scrutiny of where taxpayers money is being spent.

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?

The DLP has already stated publicly that we commit to taking more than double the current intake. We are in the process of revising our policy on Asylum seekers and refugees with an expectation that the numbers will rise even further. It seems logical that while Australian will not single out any one group for intake we should consider that those who are from particular persecuted minority groups may need to be given priority.

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 DLP does not believe in off-shore processing as it is currently being carried out. We believe the current approach fails to respect their dignity as human beings. Our policy on this matter is currently being revised with a view to establishing regional reception centres in countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia where processing can be carried out without the need for detention. Those currently on Manus Island and Nauru should immediately be brought to Australia for urgent processing and unless there is a clear and sufficient reason for them to be held they should be released into the community.

Indigenous

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

The DLP has not yet seen the proposed legislation but is not opposed to the recognition of the Indigenous people in the preamble of the Constitution. We are however concerned that any inclusion of the Indigenous people as anything other than fully equal Australian citizens may be a cause for dissension by groups that are not sympathetic to racial equality.

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?

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?

The legislation to remove exemptions was introduced into the Victorian Parliament by the Greens on 22nd June 2016. The DLP are committed to opposing and defeating that legislation. Religious freedom is a human right. To allow that or any other human right to be eroded or corrupted is to allow the corrupting of all human rights and the establishment of totalitarian government. The DLP believes the passing of ‘buffer zone’ laws has already eroded several rights including the right of religious freedom of people to public prayer. We will oppose any attempts to erode these rights.

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?

The DLP drafted a Bill in 2014 ‘Constitutional Alteration (Recognition of Marriage) Bill’ which called for a referendum to include a new section (section 51 xxiA) in the constitution. This new section would forever enshrine Marriage as the ‘union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life’. This Bill was presented to the Liberal Party three days before Prime Minister Abbott announced his intention to hold a plebiscite or referendum on the marriage issue.

The DLP believes this legislation must be introduced and a referendum held to end this matter once and for all.

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?

Firstly the DLP will work tirelessly to ensure the definition of Marriage does not change. However, should it change we understand that the next attack will be on the freedoms of religion, speech and conscience. The DLP commits to oppose any attempt to erode these freedoms and should they be eroded the DLP will commit to winning those freedoms back.

17. A single-income household (with income of \$120,000) pays around \$10,000 more tax in Australia than 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?

The DLP policy on taxation has included Family Unit Taxation (Income Splitting) since the 1960's. This system recognizes that some income earners are responsible for the economic well-being of dependents and thereby guarantees horizontal equity across the community. We commit to lobby for the Federal government to include this in taxation reform.

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?

The DLP will commit to a full review of this system. Self-regulation rarely if ever works and in an area that sexualises women and children an independent regulator is necessary. The current standard of advertising in Australia often borders on pornography and must be thoroughly revised and harsher regulations put in place.

Addiction

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

Yes. The DLP believes no industry or association, including groups such as the gambling industry and unions, should be able to make donations to political parties. All donations should be made by individuals only and anything above the current levels set by the Australian Electoral Commission should be reportable to the Commission.

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

The DLP is concerned with the impact that sports gambling advertising is having on our children and our communities. The DLP policy on gambling and gambling advertising is being revised with an intention that no such advertising should be permitted before 8:30 pm and should not be allowed during the period from the beginning of the sporting contest to the end of the contest.

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

The DLP policy is for the removal of all poker machines from Australia. While all forms of gambling can and do have people addicted to them, poker machines are by far the most damaging to our families and communities. Until such time as poker machines can be banned completely the DLP will commit to supporting any policy that will reduce the level of harm on the public.

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?

The DLP supports harsh penalties for those who manufacture illicit drugs. Their activities lead to untold numbers of deaths every year and as such penalties similar to those provided for 'attempted murder' should be considered and imposed.

For illicit drug users the DLP believes in compulsory rehabilitation similar to the methods used so successfully in Sweden. Drug users who are sent to prison in Australia often come out with little or no rehabilitation and sometimes in a worse state than when they entered. By enforcing compulsory rehabilitation for those found guilty of illicit drug use these addicts can be given a better chance not to reoffend and to live productive and fulfilling lives within our communities.

Prayer in Parliament

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

Yes. On 22nd June 2016, the DLP MP Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins spoke against the Greens plan to remove the Lord's prayer from parliament. We base our policies and principles on the 'Judeo Christian' principles that are the foundation of Australian society. The Lord's Prayer or 'Parliamentary prayer' is symbolic of our connection to those principles and reminds our parliamentarians of their obligations.

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?

Yes. The DLP's Infant Viability Bill was defeated in the Victorian parliament but that will not stop us from continuing the fight for life. In the Senate, the DLP introduced a Bill to remove Medicare funding for Gender selection abortions. It has not been voted on but the DLP will reintroduce it as soon as possible.

The DLP policy is for all Medicare funding of abortions to be removed. The use of taxpayers money to fund the destruction of millions of Australian children is abhorrent and must be stopped.

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?

Yes. The DLP has asked questions on this matter in the Victorian Parliament and will continue to pursue it. Taxpayers money for Australian Aid is expected to be used for the wellbeing of those less fortunate than ourselves; it is not expected to be used to assist in the worldwide destruction of tens of millions of human beings for the profit of others. The DLP commits unreservedly to fight against this funding.

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

Yes. The DLP is totally opposed to euthanasia and will not support any legislation that attempts to introduce it. Dr Carling-Jenkins, the DLP MP in the Victorian parliament has spoken out against euthanasia and has pushed for greater support in the areas of palliative care. The DLP believes that significant increases in public funding for palliative care is required.