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Howard: Christian values have shaped Australia

Former Prime Minister John Howard says Judeo-Christian values have been the greatest moral and ethical shaper of today's Australia. He will support those who want to preserve marriage and Australia's Christian heritage in the lead-up to the federal election on 2 July.

Mr Howard told the *Eternity* newspaper (May 2016) that we can trace much of what we value to the teachings of Jesus. The doctrine of the separation of powers, for example, reflects Christ's words in Matthew 22:21 – *Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*

He said Christians should argue their case by appealing to the whole community. Research shows that man-woman marriage is best for children.

"Children do best when they grow up in a stable, traditional married family, with a mother and a father present," he said. "Not every marriage works, of course, but it is the best model of stability for children. Not everyone who is in favour of marriage as it stands today is a bigot or a homophobe."

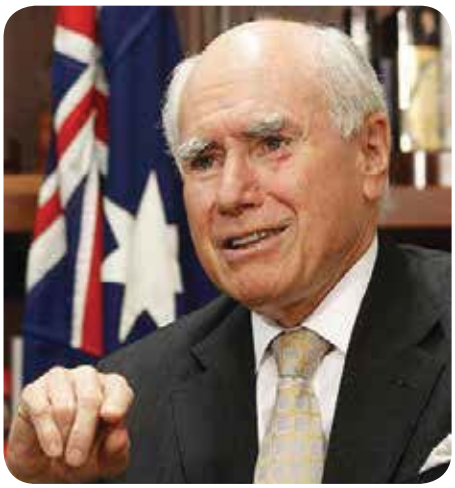
John Howard is particularly concerned about the agenda of the so-called "Safe" Schools Coalition. He warned that Judeo-Christian values are under threat. "There are some who would drive Christian religion out of the public space," he said. At the right time and place, he will add his voice to those working to preserve the current definition of marriage.

Labor and Greens oppose religious freedom

If re-elected on 2 July, the federal Liberal-Nationals Coalition has promised to hold a plebiscite to allow Australians to decide the meaning of marriage. By contrast, Labor, and the Greens, have vowed to legalised same-sex "marriage" within 100 days if they achieve government.

Labor says its marriage legislation would allow ministers of religion the freedom not to perform same-sex "marriages" – but there would be no religious freedom for Christian schools, church halls, florists, photographers and other groups. These could be forced to provide goods and services for homosexual wedding ceremonies, and to publicly approve them, against their deeply-held religious convictions.

The Greens have gone further, saying religious exemptions should be abolished from all anti-discrimination laws.



John Howard: 'Natural marriage is the best model of stability for children'

FamilyVoice national director Dr David Phillips said Labor and the Greens' policy would undermine fundamental freedoms of religion, thought, conscience and association.

"Greens leader Richard Di Natale would not employ a staffer who rejected Greens beliefs. Why then does he want to force others to do what is essentially the same thing?" Dr Phillips said.

"Moreover the policy of both Labor and the Greens would contravene section 116 of the Constitution. It says (in part): 'The Commonwealth shall not make any law for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion'."

What does the Nick Xenophon Team stand for?

In the 2013 Senate election, independent MP Nick Xenophon gained nearly 25% of the SA vote – more than the Labor Party. He is always in the media – but few voters can pinpoint his policies.



Nella Hall (CDP): supports natural marriage – unlike Nick Xenophon

When Nick entered politics in 1997 he campaigned on a single issue: *No Pokies.*

In 2016, his parliamentary voting record indicates a much wider range of issues – and he is standing candidates in every state, including NSW.

Nick has voted with the Greens, against the Coalition government, more often than any other cross-bench senator.

Nick told *VoxLink* some years ago that he never responds to surveys.

But his party is predicted to share the balance of power in the Senate.

Those thinking of supporting Nick should note that while he still wants curbs on pokies, he supports same-sex "marriage" and opposes a plebiscite on the issue.

By contrast, parties like Christian Democratic Party (CDP), Australian Christians, Family First, Democratic Labour Party and Rise Up Australia Party all support natural marriage and a plebiscite.

"Candidates and parties who support natural marriage deserve our number one vote ahead of major parties," said FamilyVoice national director Dr David Phillips.

Fined for silent prayer

A Christian man (75) has been fined $750 for praying silently near a Canberra abortion clinic.



Police act against silent prayer in Canberra

Kerry Mellor was part of a group of eight conducting a peaceful prayer vigil outside the ACT Health Centre in central Canberra. The group has prayed outside the abortion clinic for 17 years.

Police asked those praying to move on, claiming they were in violation of a new ACT exclusion zone bill which bans "protest, by any means … in relation to the provision of abortions" within 50 metres of an abortion facility.

Mr Mellor was fined because he refused to move on, saying his silent prayer cannot possibly be interpreted as "prohibited behaviour" under the law. "It is not a protest," he said. "It's a petition that God will act to change the hearts and minds of people."

Labor MP Penny Sharpe says she will introduce similar legislation to the ACT abortion prayer ban in the NSW Legislative Council in June. Her bill would prohibit all protests, including silent prayer vigils, within 150 metres of any NSW abortion clinic.

Christian Democratic Party leader Rev Fred Nile says his party will strongly oppose the bill. "It is an attack on our right to pray," he said. "It would harshly penalise people who merely assemble outside abortion clinics to pray. They do not interfere with women entering."

FamilyVoice national research officer Ros Phillips said banning silent prayer is a breach of individual freedom of expression. "These laws, already operating in the ACT, Victoria and Tasmania, are further examples of moves to silence the Christian voice in Australia."

Graham Preston is still waiting for a Tasmanian magistrate to hand down her verdict after his prosecution for standing peacefully near a Hobart abortion clinic with a sign supporting human rights.

Former Greens leader Bob Brown was arrested in January for protesting against logging in northwest Tasmania. His charge was dropped on "technical" grounds on 18 May. ■

FamilyVoice censored

A FamilyVoice submission to a Senate inquiry on the harms of internet pornography to children has been censored to remove all references to the Safe Schools Coalition (SSCA) program.

Section 3.5 of the submission, sent on 7 March, had referred to the "Safe Schools" promotion of the *Minus18* website, which provided links to pornographic sites.

The SSCA *All Of Us* program tells students to ask teachers to unblock banned websites so they can access material their parents would not allow them to see at home.

On 4 May the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee sent an email to FamilyVoice saying that section 3.5 of the FamilyVoice submission, along with some other parts, had been removed.

"The Committee has resolved that the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program does not fall within the inquiry's terms of reference," the email said.

FamilyVoice research officer Ros Phillips said such censorship is unprecedented. "We have made hundreds of submissions to parliamentary inquiries over the years," she said. "Some committees rejected our recommendations, but none wanted to delete them from the official record.

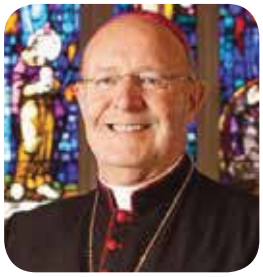
"The claim that the *Minus18* content is not relevant to an inquiry about online porn's harm to kids is baffling. As MP George Christensen told parliament on 25 February, SSCA links to sexually explicit content raise serious concerns about child safety." ■

Free speech victory

FamilyVoice Tasmania director Jim Collins has welcomed the dropping of the anti-discrimination case against the Hobart Archbishop Julian Porteous on 4 May, saying it was a 'great victory for free speech and common sense'.

Transgender Greens activist Martine Delaney lodged the complaint last September, claiming to be offended, insulted and humiliated by the Catholic Bishops' respectfully-worded booklet about church teaching on marriage. Mr Collins said the complaint was an attempt to silence Christians on the marriage issue.

Homosexual activist Rodney Croome had urged Tasmanians to complain to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner. Martine Delaney did so, and the complaint was accepted – forcing the Archbishop to pay for legal advice and undergo "conciliation" sessions.


Archbishop Porteous

Archbishop Porteous refused to back down. Delaney, who had wanted to force the church to change its teaching, reluctantly dropped the case. It seems many people thought the Greens' attempt to gag free speech was not a good look in the lead-up to the 2 July federal election.

Archbishop Porteous told *VoxLink* that he received a great deal of support during his ordeal. "Many, many people were very much encouraged by the fact that the Church, by making this public statement [in the booklet], did seek to offer its own insight about questions relating to changing the definition of marriage," he said.

"It's very important that those who hold deeply held religious beliefs are able to be respected for those beliefs and not be intimidated or forced into silence."

Dr David van Gend of Australian Marriage Forum said Rodney Croome "kicked a massive own-goal" by inciting Tasmanians to take the Catholic bishops to the thought police. "It revealed the ugly intentions of the gay 'marriage' movement – which is to harass any opponent into silence," he said.

Jim Collins said the case shows how false are claims that redefining marriage would have no impact on our current way of life. "Changing the meaning of marriage would sever marriage from its biological realities," he said. "It would erode truths about family. It would erode the freedom of speech we now enjoy in our diverse nation." ■

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phone: 1300 365 965 fax: 08 8223 5850
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Dr David and Mrs Roslyn Phillips

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Editorial

Why your vote matters

Australians have a clear choice on 2 July.

The big divide is same-sex "marriage" and related issues. A vote for Labor, the Greens or Nick Xenophon is effectively a vote for same-sex "marriage" – probably by October.

A vote for the Liberal/National Coalition is a vote for a plebiscite on the meaning of marriage. A Turnbull government would at least allow the Australian people to decide, probably later this year.

A vote for Labor or the Greens is also a vote for the entrenchment of programs like "Safe Schools" program – teaching young children that their gender is whatever they feel like; that man-woman sex is not the norm; that it is wrong even to ask if a newborn baby is a boy or a girl.

A key question is: *Will it matter?* Some people, even professing Christians, want to believe that such changes won't affect their own families.

But we need look no further than the United States. One year ago, the US Supreme Court ruled, by the narrowest of margins (5:4), that same-sex "marriage" is a fundamental right under the US Constitution. Americans in many states had earlier voted in referendums to reject same-sex "marriage". But now people in every state have had their marriages redefined, whether or not they agree.

Has this change made a difference? The answer is, sadly, yes.

The consequences of legalising same-sex marriage already established in "trendy" states like Massachusetts have begun happening elsewhere. Homosexual sex education is becoming compulsory. Christian businesses declining on conscience grounds to be involved in same-sex wedding ceremonies have received huge fines, forcing them to close. People have lost their careers for saying they support natural marriage.

And now US President Obama has ordered every school or college in America receiving any public funding to allow males who identify as females to use female toilets, and vice versa.

People with transgender feelings need our compassion. They have *gender dysphoria* – a psychological condition where their mind tells them their body is the "wrong" sex. It is akin to *body dysmorphia*, where a person feels they should not have an arm or a leg, seeking its amputation. It is an illness of the mind: a delusion. It should not be treated by affirming the delusion.

In the past, the overwhelming majority of young children with gender dysphoria lost those feelings without any treatment. But the "Safe Schools" program is driving even pre-school kids to transgender clinics.

Your vote matters. Take care!

Letters

Protect our kids

The article "Porn makes kids predators" (*The Australian*, 5/3/16) shows why the federal government urgently needs to restrict the transmission of pornography via the internet.

The default position must be that internet providers block transmission to those under 18 years of age, with proof of age needed for people over 18 who apply to lift this restriction. The present limited filters on computers (but not phones) cannot stop children who do not have filters sharing porn videos and images with those who do. Furthermore there are some parents who are either negligent or too busy to monitor their children's exposure to this destructive material.

Porn purveyors are very subtle and clever in their methods to entrap immature children.

Dennis Paton
Clontarf, NSW

Islam's endless war

Those who want to co-opt moderate Muslims in the battle against Islamist extremism overlook the fact that such terrorism is no recent phenomenon.

I was born and raised in India. During my lifetime I have observed the inability of "moderate" Muslims to live within a secular, democratic India. The result was the 1947 partition, during which a million or more people were killed in riots between Muslims and Hindus. Then came Muslim Pakistan's war against its eastern Province of Bangladesh in 1971, with mass killing and brutality.

There have also been Muslim insurgencies in Russia's Chechnya and they are still happening in the Philippines and Thailand.

Most significant of all are the 14 centuries of war between the Sunni and Shia factions of Islam, which have led to endless killing by Muslims of other Muslims in the Middle East, Africa and Pakistan.

Moderate Muslims have not been able to stop any of this. Indeed, the Muslim community provides a reservoir of terrorist recruits because of verses in the Koran and the example of Mohammed.

Babette Francis
Toorak, Vic

'Reverse bigotry'

Tasmania has just experienced a taste of what happens when words like "tolerance" and "bigotry" are used by some to justify their own intolerance and bigotry. The complaint against Archbishop Porteous is a case in point.

Christians do not hate those who disagree with us. But at the risk of being called an "intolerant bigot" if we do, we politely seek the freedom to lovingly share the reasons we have for our point of view.

It was heartening Jim Collins was given the opportunity to make the for case marriage so publicly and succinctly on *ABC TV News* the other night!

Pastor Andrew Corbett
Legana Christian Church, Tas

The education basics

After 40 years as a primary school teacher, I know the importance of the two main "basics" – reading and spelling taught by phonics, and number facts taught by repetition for instant recall.

A neurosurgeon on TV a couple of years ago said repetition-learning of number facts is an excellent exercise for the brain. So it is – and the failure to use that method is a big factor in the "dumbing down" of children today.

Maisie Semple
Ferny Hills, Qld



- The dangers of redefining marriage
- The battle for our children
- University of Sydney: Religion under fire

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Where do your candidates stand on important issues?

With marriage under threat at this year's federal election, the 2016 FamilyVoice election survey may be the most important yet.

Deciding who to vote for, and in what order, can be difficult at the best of times. Most voters don't have the time to research the views of all of their local candidates.

And on 2 July, Australians will be asked to choose between more candidates than usual – with every single Senate seat up for re-election. The 2016 double dissolution federal election – triggered after the Senate twice failed to pass a bill to check trade union corruption – will be only the seventh since federation in 1901.

Election survey

FamilyVoice is contacting most parties and every candidate with an email address, contesting both the House of Representatives and the Senate. We are seeking their views on ten key issues related to family, faith and freedom.

Candidate responses will be available in the week up to the election on our website. Click on http://www.fava.org.au/election-surveys/commonwealth/ then click on the questionnaire or the replies from parties, or House of Reps or Senate candidates.

Candidates are given some brief information about each issue, and then asked to say how they would act or vote on a specific question. Possible responses range from "Yes definitely" to "Definitely not" or "No comment".

Some of the questions are listed below.

Prayers in parliament

Prayers in parliament are an important daily reminder that we must all ultimately answer to the higher authority of Almighty God. The prayers, which consist of the Lord's Prayer and a request for God's guidance, are an expression of the Christian foundation of our nation.

According to the latest census, about 61% of Australians identify with Christianity.

Would you vote to support the continued opening of parliament with Christian prayers?

Marriage

In 2004 the Marriage Act 1961 was amended to reaffirm the understanding across cultures throughout history, that marriage is the union of a man and a woman.

The purpose of marriage is to ensure that wherever possible, children are raised with both mum and dad role models in a stable environment – shown by research to be the safest family type.

Would you vote to retain the Marriage Act 1961 definition of marriage as "the union of a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life"?

Safe Schools Coalition program

There has been widespread concern about the content of the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program now operating in over 500 Australian schools.

Its co-founder, lesbian activist Roz Ward, has admitted that the program is "not about stopping bullying". Rather, it promotes unproven theories about transgenderism and same-sex attraction, uses invalid statistics, encourages partisan activism, and ignores most victims of school bullies.

Would you support the cancellation of the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program, with funding used instead to support proven programs that address all forms of school bullying?



The meaning of marriage is a crucial issue on 2 July

Support for families

Surveys indicate that a large majority of parents would prefer one parent (usually the mother) to care for their children full-time at home if they could afford it.

Current child care benefits are much more generous to mothers who place their children in child care centres than to those who care for their own children at home.

All parents should be treated equally, receiving the same benefits (possibly as vouchers) at birth – enabling them to spend the money on childcare or on helping one parent stay at home.



Would you support legislation to provide equal benefits to all families with young children, either baby bonus, parental leave or child care, whether or not the mother is in the paid workforce?

Freedom of speech

Laws which prohibit speech or actions that merely "offend or insult" others are an unwarranted curb on free speech. Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act has been used to stifle important community debates.

Would you vote to repeal the words "offend" and "insult" from section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act?

Internet filtering

The current classification system for publications, films and videos bans dangerous material including child pornography, and material promoting crime, suicide or terrorism.

Unfiltered, the internet can bring explicit pornography and other harmful material into the family home – and to children outside the home via mobile phones.

Voluntary computer-based filters do not protect children in vulnerable situations. Mandatory default filtering at the ISP level is essential to protect children and maintain a healthy society.

Would you support mandatory default filtering of the internet at ISP level to exclude all material currently refused classification in print, film or video media?

Other issues

The survey also covers other important topics, such as illicit drugs, gambling, education, and euthanasia.

Make a difference!

Make your vote count! Before heading to the polling booth, check where your candidates and parties stand on these issues by visiting www.fava.org.au. Click on "Federal election 2016" in the right-hand menu.

Family, faith and freedom are worth voting for!