

Questions for Candidates 2010 Federal Election

The following questions address issues relating to matters of public debate and sometimes federal parliamentary vote during recent years. Please indicate how you would vote or did vote on these issues by answering each question - by ticking the appropriate box or by writing an answer on a separate sheet. If you are bound by party policy on a particular question, please provide an answer in accordance with that policy.

1. 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 and character of our nation. According to the latest census, 64% of Australians identify as Christians.

Do you support the current practice of opening each day of parliament with Christian prayers?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

2. 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 Greens' Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 would have fundamentally changed this definition, removing the words "a man and a woman" as well as "to the exclusion of all others", opening the door to polygamy and same-sex "marriage" – to the detriment of children, who do best when raised by both a mum and a dad.

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"?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

3. Abortion

The paid parental leave and baby bonus laws provide for women whose babies are delivered stillborn after 20 weeks gestation to receive the payments (on average about \$8000 paid leave or \$5200 baby bonus). In most late abortions after 20 weeks, the baby is induced and delivered dead ("stillborn") – and current laws entitle the mother to thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money.

Would you vote to amend the paid parental leave and baby bonus laws in order to remove the loophole allowing women who undergo a late abortion for "social" reasons to access these payments?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

4. Illicit drugs

Harm minimisation has been one of the key principles of Australia's drug strategy since 1985. Harm minimisation measures include needle and syringe exchanges, injecting rooms, heroin prescription, methadone substitution, liberal cannabis laws and drug testing kits. In 2003 the House of Representatives "Roads to Recovery" report called for the replacement of the current focus of the National Drug Strategy on harm minimisation with a new focus on harm prevention and treatment. This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Sweden has shown that "drug free" policies can dramatically reduce the use of illicit drugs.

Would you support the replacement of the current focus of the National Drug Strategy on harm minimisation strategies with a new focus on achieving a drug free society?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

5. Internet filtering

The current classification system for publications, films and videos bans (i.e. refuses classification for) dangerous material including child pornography, and material promoting crime, suicide or terrorism. Unfiltered, the internet can bring explicit pornography and material that promotes terrorism, crime or suicide into the family home. Voluntary PC based filtering systems will not protect children in vulnerable situations such as the 9-10 year olds reported by the Canberra Hospital for sexually abusing even younger children after exposure to internet pornography. Mandatory filtering at the ISP level is essential for the protection of Australian children and for a healthy society.

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

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

6. Online gambling

The 1999 Productivity Report on Gambling demonstrated the enormous harm to Australian families from addictive forms of gambling such as poker machines. The 2010 Productivity Report found that despite the implementation of harm minimisation measures in the last decade, problem gamblers are still responsible for around 40% of money spent on poker machines. Internet gambling – with or without harm minimisation measures – could lead to even greater levels of problem gambling.

Would you oppose any measure which seeks to legalise online gambling?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

7. Education

A 2009 review of the Howard government's school chaplaincy program by Edith Cowan and New England University researchers found it is working well. During the two weeks prior to the survey, chaplains had dealt with students' behaviour issues, bullying and harassment, family issues, mental health issues, alcohol and drug abuse, self-harm and suicide – and 83% of school principals said they were "very satisfied" with the program.

Would you support full funding for the current school chaplaincy system until 2014?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

8. Child care benefits

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 childcare benefit. They should be free to spend it as they choose – 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 the mother is in the workforce or not?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

9. Human rights

There has been widespread public concern – including from leading judges and law professors – about moves to introduce a charter of rights or Human Rights Act. The accountability of the Australian parliament to the Australian people would be undermined by making lawmaking, and judicial interpretation of laws, subject to international instruments and the ideological decisions of United Nations treaty monitoring bodies.

Would you vote against any form of a national charter of rights that would subject Australian lawmaking to international instruments and jurisprudence?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

10. Vilification legislation

Laws which prohibit vilification on the grounds of religious belief or sexuality are an unwarranted interference with free speech and religious liberty. Those who point out the health risks of homosexual behaviour or who question claims and practices of a particular religion, such as Islam, should not be penalised. Australians are already adequately protected by sedition laws, which prohibit incitement to use force or violence against others that would threaten the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth.

Would you vote against any attempt to introduce a "vilification" law that would penalise frank discussion and debate of religious belief or sexuality?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

CANDIDATE DETAILS

Name: Electorate:

Party: Signature:

*Please return to FamilyVoice Australia
Phone: 1300 365 965 Fax: 08 8223 5850 Email: survey@fava.org.au*