

Questions for candidates in the 2007 federal election

The following questions address issues relating to matters of recent community debate and sometimes federal parliamentary vote. 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

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. Relationship registers

Would you vote to amend the Marriage Act 1961 to prevent states from giving legal recognition to couple relationships other than marriage, including homosexual, lesbian and de facto relationships?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

3. Abortion funding

Would you support a change to the Medicare schedule so that taxpayers are no longer forced to pay for second trimester and late term abortions?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

4. Illicit drugs

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

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

5. Internet filtering

Would you support mandatory filtering of the internet at ISP level to exclude all explicit pornography as well as material which promotes crime, suicide or terrorism?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

6. Benefits supporting marriage

Would you oppose any measure which seeks to extend to homosexual and lesbian couples the benefits currently given to married couples?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

7. Cloning

Would you vote to repeal those laws which permit the creation of human embryos by cloning for use in destructive research?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

8. Child care benefits

Would you support legislation requiring equal child care benefits to be paid directly to all parents of young children, whether the children are cared for at home or in a child care centre?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

9. Access Card

Would you oppose the introduction of a mandatory smart card for access to all government social services including Medicare?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

10. Vilification legislation

Would you vote to oppose laws which would prohibit vilification on the grounds of religious belief or sexuality?

Yes definitely Probably Unsure Unlikely Definitely not No comment

CANDIDATE DETAILS

Name: Electorate:

Party: Signature:

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BACKGROUND TO THE 2007 FEDERAL ELECTION SURVEY QUESTIONS

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.

2. Relationship registers

In 2004 the Parliament amended the Marriage Act 1961 to reaffirm that marriage is between a man and a woman and to prevent courts recognising same sex marriages. The homosexual lobby is now seeking to gain legal recognition for same sex relationships through state or territory legislation setting up civil unions or registered relationships. The Commonwealth's constitutional marriage power enables it to further amend the Marriage Act 1961 to invalidate these state laws in order to protect and defend the unique status of marriage.

3. Abortion funding

A national opinion poll conducted in 2005 by Market Facts (Qld) found that 67% of Australians are opposed to Medicare funding of abortions performed in the second trimester (14-26 weeks). Children born as early as 21 weeks are now surviving thanks to the wonderful advances in modern medicine. Second trimester abortions can result in a live born child who is then left to die. 49 such abortions were recorded in Victoria alone in 2005. Some second trimester abortions are performed by the partial birth abortion method which has now been banned by the US Congress, a ban upheld by the US Supreme Court. Taxpayers should not be forced to pay for these abortions.

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.

5. Internet filtering

The internet provides many benefits but also carries many dangers. 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.

6. Benefits supporting marriage

Over many centuries, governments have granted marriage a privileged status not given to other types of relationships, for two key reasons. Only marriage provides the best environment for raising children with stability plus complementary male and female role models (Mum and Dad). Men and women complement each other in marriage, benefiting each other and society. Homosexual and lesbian relationships do not have these characteristics and should not be given the benefits given to married couples.

7. Cloning

In 2002 federal parliament unanimously banned all forms of human cloning. In 2006 a private member's bill lifted the ban on the creation of human embryos by cloning for use in destructive research. It is wrong to create a human life with the intention of using him or her for research and then destruction. Cloning for research is scientifically unnecessary as the hoped for benefits from cloning are being more effectively and more safely obtained using stem cells derived in an ethically uncontroversial way from adults or from umbilical cord blood.

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.

9. Access Card

A mandatory smart card for access to all government social services including Medicare is an unjustifiable intrusion into individual privacy and a possible step towards a national identity card. While there may be a need to rationalise the processes used to access social services, there is no need to include Medicare in this scheme. For millions of Australians, Medicare is the only Commonwealth benefit they access. Once billions of dollars are invested in a smart card which will be mandatory for any Australian unwilling to opt out of the Medicare system and forego any entitlements to social services, there will be a natural 'function creep' until the access card becomes a de facto national identity card.

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.