

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES IN THE 2004 FEDERAL ELECTION

CANDIDATE NAME:

ELECTORATE: PARTY:

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

1. Prayers in parliament

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

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

2. Affirmation of marriage

Would you vote to repeal laws prohibiting discrimination on the ground of marital status, so that marriage can be affirmed and rewarded as more beneficial to society than cohabitation?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

3. 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?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

4. Pornographic videos

Pornographic videos - classified "X" - cannot legally be sold or hired from any State: would you support federal legislation banning their distribution from the ACT or NT?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

5. Meaning of marriage

Would you vote to amend the Marriage Act 1961 to define marriage as "the union of a man and a woman, voluntarily entered into for life" and to prohibit recognition of foreign same-sex "marriages"?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

6. Abortion funding

Would you support a change in Medicare laws so that taxpayers are no longer forced to pay for "social convenience" abortions?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

7. Media standards

Would you vote to amend the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 to tighten standards and reverse the recent trend towards more violence, coarse language and explicit sex in films and TV?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

8. Shared parenting

Would you vote to amend the Family Law Act 1975 to provide a presumption of joint custody of children following divorce unless one parent has breached the marital commitment or poses a risk to the child?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

9. Discrimination

Would you vote to amend the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 to allow affirmative action for males in the provision of scholarships for primary school teaching?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

10. Internet gambling

Would you vote to minimise addictive internet gambling by requiring banks to block credit card transactions from online gambling websites?

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree No comment

*Please return to Festival of Light Australia, 4th Floor, 68 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000.
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BACKGROUND TO THE 2004 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, over 70% of Australians identify with Christian churches.

2. Affirmation of marriage

Evidence abounds that marriage is more beneficial to society than cohabitation. Marriages are more stable and the children of married parents perform better educationally and socially at school, have lower involvement in drug-taking and crime and hence develop into more productive adults. Laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status prevent preference for marriage and thereby damage society. Such laws should be repealed so that marriage can be affirmed and rewarded.

3. 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.

4. Pornographic videos

X-rated videos, containing numerous explicit scenes of sexual acts and perversions, are currently banned in all Australian states. Studies have linked this kind of pornography with rape, molestation and child sex abuse. Paedophiles often use X-videos in homes to persuade children to "do what adults do". However, the federal government allows sex shops in the ACT and NT to distribute them by post to homes throughout the country.

5. Meaning of marriage

The Australian Marriage Act 1961 assumes the common law understanding that marriage is "the union of a man and a woman, voluntarily entered into for life" but this definition is not stated explicitly. In the light of recent recognition of same-sex "marriages" in some foreign countries, the meaning of marriage in Australia should be protected by defining it explicitly in the Marriage Act and prohibiting recognition in Australia of foreign same-sex "marriages".

6. Abortion funding

Taxpayers who oppose abortion-on-demand are forced to pay for the killing of unborn children through Medicare. People who conscientiously oppose abortion should not be forced to pay for operations that are ethically offensive to them. Except in extreme cases when the mother's life is in danger, abortion should not be claimable on Medicare, just as face lifts and similar "social" operations are not claimable.

7. Media standards

Recent trends in television and radio programs to voyeurism and the promotion of violence, drugs, suicide, promiscuity and homosexuality are damaging the social fabric of Australia. These trends also greatly limit the freedom of viewers and listeners who want to avoid offensive programs. The Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 needs amendment to tighten standards.

8. Shared parenting

The decisions of the Australian Family Court in recent years suggest that it operates on a presumption that the mother will have custody while the father is allowed access to his children for two days a fortnight. The Family Law Act should be amended to require separating or divorced parents to share equitably responsibilities of parenthood and to acknowledge the fundamental right of children to maintain frequent and reasonable contact with both mother and father following parental separation or divorce unless there is a clear and demonstrable risk of harm to the child.

9. Discrimination

The educational standards achieved by boys in recent years have been falling and part of the reason is believed to be the scarcity of male role models among primary teachers. In order to redress the balance, scholarships for males to train as primary school teachers should be encouraged. Any anti-discrimination laws preventing such scholarships should be amended because the education of boys is more important than social engineering ideology.

10. Internet gambling

Addictive gambling on the internet is a growing problem. The Interactive Gambling Act 2001 bans gambling at casino-style websites, but many Australian gamblers flout the ban by using foreign sites. The most effective way of limiting the social problems resulting from compulsive internet gambling would be to amend this Act to require credit-card issuers to identify and block transactions from illegal gambling websites.