

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES IN THE 2007 NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTION

The following questions address issues relating to matters of community debate in New South Wales during recent years. Would you please indicate how you would vote or did vote on these issues by answering the questions below. For each question, please tick the appropriate box or write an answer, either below 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 practice of opening each day of parliament with Christian prayers?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

2. The Governor

Would you support the return of the NSW Governor to Government House?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

3. Registration of civil unions

Would you vote against any bill that provides for the registration of civil unions or other relationships?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

4. Mardi Gras

Would you support moves to end taxpayer funding of homosexual Mardi Gras events?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

5. Abortion

Would you oppose any move to legalise abortion in New South Wales?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

6. Human cloning

Would you oppose any move to legalise human cloning in New South Wales?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

7. Australian civics curriculum

Would you support the inclusion of Australia's Christian heritage as part of school civics or history curricula?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

8. Child protection

Would you oppose legislation that would remove the presumption of innocence from parents or others accused of child abuse?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

9. Illegal drugs

Would you support the replacement of the current "harm minimisation" policy on illegal drugs with rigorous enforcement of a "harm prevention" policy, including closure of the Kings Cross supervised injecting room?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

10. Homosexual vilification

Would you support freedom of speech by voting to repeal the amendments made to anti-discrimination law by the Anti-Discrimination (Homosexual Vilification) Amendment Act 1993?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

CANDIDATE NAME:

ELECTORATE: PARTY:

SIGNATURE: DATE:

*Please return to Festival of Light Australia, GPO Box 9894, Sydney NSW 2001.
Phone: 1300 365 965 Fax: 08 8223 5850 Email: survey@fol.org.au*

BACKGROUND TO QUESTIONS FOR 2007 NSW ELECTION CANDIDATES

1. Prayers in parliament

The tradition of Christian prayers in parliament is part of our Australian heritage - reminding MPs, like all other people, that they are imperfect and need guidance. This tradition recognises the 68% of Australians who identified themselves as adherents of Christian faith in the 2001 Census. Opening parliamentary proceedings with prayer is an appropriate expression of government responsibility to its electorate.

2. The Governor

Government House has been the residence of the Governor of New South Wales almost since settlement in 1788. In 1996, the then Premier of NSW, Hon Bob Carr, evicted the Governor who was then required to provide his or her own home and commute to an office leased by the taxpayer, while Government House remains underused, and is also maintained by the taxpayer. In addition to the increased financial costs, the damage to the system of checks and balances present in our system of government by diminishing the office of the Governor is an intolerable attack on democracy.

3. Registration of civil unions

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, have lower involvement in drug-taking and crime and hence develop into more productive adults. The special status of marriage should therefore be protected by rejecting any elevation of other relationships, such as male-female cohabitation or same sex partnerships, to a similar legal status.

4. Mardi Gras

The Mardi Gras events promote the homosexual lifestyle as acceptable and worthwhile. In fact, homosexual behaviour is associated with adverse outcomes in physical and mental health and social well-being. It is also morally repugnant to many members of the community. Some of the events include lewd behaviour in public which would not be tolerated in any other context. It is inappropriate for public funds to be used to underwrite these events.

5. Abortion

Abortion is currently illegal under sections 82-84 of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW). Abortion should remain unlawful because it terminates human life and can result in mothers experiencing serious physical and mental suffering.

6. Human cloning

Cloning of human embryos for any purpose is currently unlawful in New South Wales. In December 2006 the Commonwealth made cloning of human embryos for research lawful. The Premier, Mr Iemma, has indicated he may introduce similar legislation in NSW. It is wrong to create human life solely for destructive research. The medical and scientific benefits sought through human cloning can be better attained through ethical research such as the use of adult stem cells.

7. Australian civics curriculum

A nation can only progress when its citizens are aware of their nation's origins. It is important that Australians understand all aspects of their heritage, including the significant Christian component.

8. Child protection

The Australian criminal justice system protects the innocent from unjust conviction and punishment, by presuming that an accused person is innocent unless a charge against him is proved beyond reasonable doubt. This presumption seems to have been wound back for accusations of child abuse, out of concern for child protection. However, false allegations of child abuse can easily be made, leading to injustice.

9. Illegal drugs

Australia has the highest per capita use of illegal drugs in the world, triggering a mental health crisis - since those addicted to marijuana and amphetamines risk becoming mentally ill 3-11 times more than those who do not use drugs. Teen cannabis users can damage their brains irreversibly. The "harm minimisation" policies of the past have failed - they sustain drug users in their habit. The Kings Cross supervised injecting room seriously breaches Australia's commitments under the international drug conventions.

10. Homosexual vilification

The definition of homosexual vilification in NSW law is so broad that any comment considered offensive by a member of the homosexual community may be deemed unlawful. This law has been used to harass people who have expressed views on homosexual behaviour in good faith, with the intention to inform, not denigrate. The law has thus limited freedom of speech, a fundamental value in our democratic society.