

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES IN THE 2006 VICTORIAN ELECTION

The following questions relate to matters of community concern in Victoria 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. Civil Unions

Would you vote against any bill that provided for the creation of civil unions?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

3. Preference for marriage

Would you support moves to allow married couples to be preferred for child care roles, eg adoption, fostering or assisted reproductive technology?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

4. Charter of Rights

Would you vote to repeal the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

5. Racial and Religious Tolerance Act

Will you vote to repeal the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

6. Abortion

Would you vote against any bill that would decriminalise abortion in Victoria?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

7. Poker Machines

Would you support legislation to phase our poker machines in Victoria over a ten year period?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

8. Sex Education

Would you support the teaching in schools of sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within marriage as a most desirable lifestyle?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

9. Drugs

Would you support the replacement of the current "harm minimisation" policy on illegal drugs with rigorous enforcement of a "harm prevention" policy including mandatory treatment for addicts?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

10. Internet filters

Would you support legislation requiring the installation of filter software on all Victorian library computers to block access to violent and pornographic websites?

No comment Definitely Not Unlikely Unsure Probably Yes Definitely

CANDIDATE NAME:

ELECTORATE: PARTY:

SIGNATURE: DATE:

Please return to Festival of Light Australia, GPO Box 4138, Melbourne VIC 3001.

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BACKGROUND TO QUESTIONS FOR 2006 VIC 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. 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 de facto relationships or homosexual relationships, to a similar legal status.

3. Preference for marriage

Overwhelming research evidence shows that children develop best with a mother and a father committed to each other and to their children. The rate of child abuse is much higher in single-parent households. The children in same-sex blended families achieve poorer results at school than children of married couples. Thus the interests of children are best served by restricting their care to married couples wherever possible.

4. Charter of Rights

Senior Victorian lawyers have condemned the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms Act 2006* because it would lead to costly expansion of the bureaucracy, increased litigation and frivolous court cases, as has occurred in Canada and New Zealand. The Act places interpretation of "rights" in the hands of libertarian zealots. The Act should be repealed.

5. Racial and Religious Tolerance Act

The *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* has been used to punish pastors for teaching about the Koran in a Christian church, thus denying their freedom of speech. The pastors stressed the need to love Muslims, but the Act unjustly deems "intention" to be irrelevant. The Act treats religion as if it were an unchangeable trait like race and requires the Equal Opportunity Commission to assist only the complainant. Laws already exist to punish threats or violence - this law is unjust, unnecessary and should be repealed.

6. Abortion

Intentionally killing an unborn baby by abortion is a serious offence in Victoria (*Crimes Act 1958*) but is allowed under the 1969 Menhennit ruling if deemed necessary to protect a pregnant woman from serious danger to her mental or physical health. Recent moves to decriminalise abortion would allow the deliberate killing of unborn children for any or no reason throughout all nine months of pregnancy.

7. Poker Machines

Since poker machines were introduced in Victoria in 1991 without public consultation, pubs and the government have grown richer while small businesses have failed and problem gamblers, broken families, embezzlement and suicide have increased. Advertising bans and other measures have failed to stem the increase in problem gambling: Victorians now lose \$2.5 billion each year on the pokies - more than ever before.

8. Sex education

Since sexual abstinence is the prime means of preventing sexual exploitation and reducing sexual diseases, abstinence should be promoted at school. Since marriage remains the best environment for raising children and for the ongoing general health of society, the benefit of this life-long commitment should be explained to young people.

9. 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. Victoria should adopt Sweden's successful harm prevention policies which include mandatory treatment for addicts.

10. Internet filters

All Victorians, especially children, are entitled to protection from exposure to harmful material - yet most Victorian libraries have not installed filter software to block pornographic and violent websites. The federal Labor Opposition supports mandatory Internet filtering - this should be a bipartisan policy for all parliaments.