

Supporting statements for Christian Values Check List

Federal election November 2007

The following material provides substantiating statements for the 2007 Australian Christian Values Checklist. The material is taken from Party policy statements, public statements, media reports etc. In some cases the voting record of the parties over the past three years has been considered.

For additional information and Party Policies see the follow political party websites.

Party Policies

CDP: http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/familyfirst.php#policies>

Coalition –

Liberal: <http://www.liberal.org.au/about/ourpoliciesplans.php>

Nationals: <http://www.nationals.org.au/About/Policies/default.asp>

ALP: Policies & National Platform and Constitution 2007:

<http://www.alp.org.au/policy/index.php>

Democrats: http://www.democrats.org.au/campaigns/election_07_our_election_platform/

Greens: <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php>

Other surveys of Christian values:

Festival of Light has asked all people standing for election ten questions. The questions and the individual responses of the candidates are recorded on their website: <http://www.fol.org.au/>

The Australian Christian Lobby has asked all major political parties a series of 25 questions and asked them to respond. Those responses are posted on a website set up for the purpose: www.australiavotes.org (ACL website is <http://www.acl.org.au/>)

1. Prayers to open Parliament each day

CDP: “Supports the retention of Christian prayers at the outset of each daily parliamentary session.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Support prayer to open Parliament in response to Festival of Light Survey: <http://www.fol.org.au/>

Liberal/Nationals: “Firmly committed to the opening of Parliament exclusively each day with the Lord’s Prayer”. Response to ACL Survey. www.australiavotes.org

Labor: Kevin Rudd - Before the last election, at a ‘Meet the Candidate Forum’, Kevin Rudd was asked by Ps. Jill Lashbrook in QLD (Catch the Fire coordinator), “If elected would Labor stop prayer in parliament?”, Mr. Rudd responded, “You do not need to pray in parliament, you can do it at home”. See <http://catchthefire.com.au/blog/2007/09/21/experiencerelationship-or-academic-article-by-pastor-danny-nalliah/#more-747>

When the previous Parliament was sworn in, in the House of Representatives - “One of 87 Coalition members of the House of Representatives failed to take an oath on the Bible in 2004, compared to 30 of 60 Labor MHRs who took an affirmation rather than an oath.” ‘Rudd’s religious sales pitch’, Tony Abbott, <http://www.tonyabbott.com.au/news/article.aspx?ID=1361>

Democrats: On 1 March 2006, Democrats Senator Lyn Allison moved to “(i) remove religious references from statutory oaths and pledges, (ii) abolish official parliamentary prayers, (iii) remove tax advantages that solely apply for religious purposes, and (iv) consider other ways of achieving a true separation of church and state.”

The motion was defeated 50-7. Senators Allison, Bartlett, Brown (Bob), Milne, Murray and Nettle and Siewert voted for it. These are all the Democrats and Greens Senators - except Senator Stott-Despoja who is not recorded on Hansard as having voted. See

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/work/journals/2006/jnlp_074.pdf (No 21, Page 15/23 or Page 1935.) Labor, Liberal, Nationals and Family First all voted against the motion.

Greens: Bob Brown moved a motion to remove prayer from Parliament in 1997:

http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/PIWeb/view_document.aspx?id=793246&table=HANSARDS

2. Teach Australia’s Christian heritage and history in all schools

CDP: “All students should leave school with a good knowledge of the history of Australia, its Christian heritage and the development of its democratic institutions, and the responsibilities of citizens.”

Citizenship: “CDP supports as citizenship test that requires would-be citizens to demonstrate competency in English, knowledge of our Australian heritage and support for traditional Australian values.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “Family First believes that Australian history should be taught in all schools, and that includes our Judeo-Christian history”. Correspondence from Family First.

They also support the citizenship test.

Ref: *Fielding backs citizenship test* - ABC, Monday, September 18, 2006 “Family First Senator Steve Fielding has welcomed the proposal for a formal citizenship test for migrants... "The reason why you want to learn English is so you can communicate with the rest of the community in Australia," he said. "We need to go the Australian way and commonsense prevails here." "This is all about making sure that we have people being integrated into the Australian way of life and that's what's being debated here. ”

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200609/s1742892.htm>

Liberal/Nationals: The Government’s new program on teaching history has references to teaching beliefs and values including Christianity. It specifically mentions Richard Johnson, Samuel Marsden & de Quiros.

The Report on teaching history to Years 9 and 10 says “**Beliefs and Values Perspectives:** The study of beliefs and values includes, for example, issues such as the influence of Christian churches and liberal democratic philosophies on the development of Australia’s political, social and economic institutions and practices.” Geoffrey Blainey and Elizabeth Ward were on the Reference Panel.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/key_issues/Australian_History/Default.htm

Citizenship Test: The booklet outlining the Citizenship test

The Australian government has recently established a citizenship test for new immigrants who want to become Australian citizens. Whilst much of the test focuses on 'Australian values', the program acknowledges our Christian heritage when the official Booklet says "Australia has a Judeo-Christian heritage, and two-thirds of Australians describe themselves as Christians."

Read about the test at <http://www.citizenship.gov.au/test/index.htm>

Labor: No specific policy.

Democrats: No policy – see Question 1 for their views on Christianity.

Greens: No policy – see Question 1 for their views on Christianity.

3. Promotion and support of marriage over de facto co-habitation

CDP: “CDP supports programs that highlight the social utility of marriage between a man and a woman, for life, and to the exclusion of all others.” At http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: In addressing breakdown of marriage they speak of both marriages and relationships equally: “FAMILY FIRST believes marriage and relationship breakdown in Australia is a national crisis and the social, emotional and economic costs are huge... FAMILY FIRST believes the focus must be on preventing marriage and relationship breakdown, not on the 'after-effects' such as ensuring the process of separating or divorcing is as smooth as possible.”
<http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policyrelationships.pdf>

Liberal/Nationals: Whilst some support is given to the promotion of marriage, heterosexual de facto relationships are also supported through various programs, including the Relationship Centres. See <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/>

Labor: Platform Ch 12, 70. “Labor believes that family law should apply in a consistent and uniform way to de-facto relationships across Australia.” And Ch 13, No 16 “Labor will ensure that all couples who have a mutual commitment to a shared life do not suffer discrimination because they are not married.” At http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf

Democrats: Support equal relationship recognition for same-sex and other couples.

Greens: Support equal relationship recognition for same-sex and other couples. The Greens say they want “de facto relationships to have equal status in law and government policy regardless of sexuality and gender identity.”
Sexuality and Gender Identity Policy at http://www.greens.org.au/about/policy/policy.php?policy_id=29

4. Provide free pre-marriage education/voucher for couples

This was a recommendation in the *Marriage Manifesto* presented at the National Summit in September. The Marriage Manifesto is at http://www.saltshakers.org.au/pdf/443375_ISSUES_-_MARRIAGE_-_MARR.pdf

No parties have a policy to do this at present.

CDP: “School education programs preparing for marriage - Free pre marriage counselling covering practical issues such as budgeting issues etc.” Answer to ACL Survey.
http://www.cdpwa.org.au/media.php?content_id=91

Family First: “Family First supports pre-marriage education vouchers or funding for couples considering marriage.” (Correspondence from Family First)

Liberal/Nationals: Attorney General Philip Ruddock told the Marriage Summit this particular proposal was something the Coalition would look at.

The Coalition has established Family Relationship Centres. The Family Relationships Centres provide “services that assist individuals, couples and families to develop skills that foster positive relationships with their partner, children and other family members. Assistance offered includes promoting positive parenting, communication and problem solving skills for individuals and couples throughout the lifecycle, including relationship education in schools, courses for pre-marriage and at other key transition points such as becoming a parent.”
<http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/www/agd/familyreonline.nsf/Page/RWP200E56A80C1A2201CA2572180001AD69>

The website lists a range of pre-marriage courses – but these are offered by individual providers and fees are charged by those groups – such as Anglicare and Relationships Australia.

Labor: “Labor believes that community-based services aimed at preventing marital and family breakdown, such as relationship education, family skills training, marriage preparation and marriage counselling and adolescent and family mediation should be a priority and readily available.” Platform, No 67, P 199 http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf
There is no mention of providing a free 'pre-marriage education' service or a voucher.

Democrats: Do not promote marriage as superior.

Greens: Marriage is not supported through such policy proposals – all relationships considered equal.

5. Income splitting for married couples with dependent children

CDP: “CDP supports income splitting for household members related by blood or marriage.”
http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

No other parties have a policy to allow income splitting. The Coalition has given tax advantages to families with young children in lieu of this proposal.

Family First: “Family First has not pursued income tax splitting because both the major parties have opposed this. Instead, Family First has proposed increasing the tax free threshold for each additional child in a family. Family First wants an increase in the tax free threshold by \$1000 for each dependent child. See: <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policytaxsystem.pdf> “ - Statement from Family First.

Liberals/Nationals: Do not support income splitting. The Coalition has given some tax threshold advantages to families with young children.

Labor: Does not propose income splitting.

Democrats: Does not propose income splitting.

Greens: Does not propose income splitting.

6. Family impact statement tabled in Parliament before a vote

The Coalition responded to Family First’s call to provide Family Impact Statements for all proposed legislation prior to the last election. These statements have generally been prepared and presented to Cabinet as decisions are made on legislation. However, they have NOT been tabled in parliament – this is needed so that the process of addressing the impact on families is accountable to the public.

CDP: “Introduce family impact statements for all proposed legislation”
http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “Family First proposes that a Family Impact Assessment Commission be established to provide analysis and advice on the impact of family wellbeing and stability of legislation and policy proposed or in existence”
<http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/FAMILYIMPACTSTATEMENTS.pdf>

Liberal Agreed to do family impact statements as part of an agreement with Family First. These are done by the Departments involved together with the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and submitted to Cabinet - but they are not tabled in Parliament.

Labor: ALP Media Release: 10 August 2007. “Under a Rudd Labor Government, Cabinet decisions will be informed by rigorous and upgraded family impact statements and dedicated research on work and family concerns. The Office of Work and Family which will be established within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, will provide detailed **family impact statements** on all submissions presented to Federal Cabinet.” <http://www.alp.org.au/media/0807/msloo100.php>

However there is **no mention** of them being tabled in Parliament.

Democrats: No policy.

Greens: No policy.

7. Support parents choice in education with educational vouchers

CDP: “All parents must have the right to choose the school for their children that supports the beliefs, traditions and values of their home life. The feasibility of an education voucher system should be investigated.” And “Education vouchers to give parents the choice of school, whether government or non government”. http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “Defend parents’ rights to choose schooling that supports their family’s values”. http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/EDUCATION_001.pdf No mention of a voucher system.

Liberal/Nationals: Support choice of schools but not a voucher system. “The Coalition’s unwavering commitment to school choice has seen annual funding for non-government schools grow to \$6.3 billion in 2007-08. Because of our policies (opposed by Labor) low-fee independent schools have flourished in the last decade, with the opening of no less than 168 new non-government schools since 1996. Government schools are also being funded at record levels.” P 23, <http://www.liberal.org.au/info/docs/documents/AustraliaStrongProsperousAndSecure.pdf>

Labor: Platform: “Labor recognises that government has a primary obligation for the provision of high quality public schooling that is accessible to all children and young people. Public funding for schooling supports the right of families to choose non-government schooling and supports non-government schools on the basis of need, within the context of promoting a socially and culturally cohesive society and the effective use of public funds.” And “public funding for schooling supports the right of families to choose non-government schooling and supports non-government schools on the basis of need, within the context of promoting a socially and culturally cohesive society and the effective use of public funds.” There is no support for a voucher system.

Democrats: No support for a voucher system. Support for increased funding for state schools over non-government schools. http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Education_Schools_2007.pdf

Greens: No support for a voucher system. The Greens give priority to public education: “support funding mechanisms that prioritise public schools.” They also oppose the development of private schools: “reintroduce the New Schools Policy which will prevent the development of new private schools that would threaten the viability and diversity of existing public schools in the same area.” <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=24>

8. Support the 'presumption' of equal shared parenting after divorce

CDP: “Reform Family Law to recognise harm caused to children by parent break-up. Change Family Court culture from family destruction to family cohesion.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “FAMILY FIRST believes that, when a relationship breaks down, shared parenting is the best outcome, because children can continue to have a real father and mother”. <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policysharedparenting.pdf>

Liberal/National: Some efforts have been made to ensure contact with both parents through the Family Court – however shared parenting is interpreted as varying proportions of ‘sharing’. “... through reforms to the Family Law Court and the establishment of Family Relationship Centres.” See <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/>

Labor: No policy of presumption of equal shared parenting.

Democrats: No policy of presumption of equal shared parenting.

Greens: No policy of presumption of equal shared parenting.

9. Preserve marriage - Oppose same-sex marriage

Liberal, Nationals, Labor, Family First and CDP all support marriage as only between a man and a woman. All MPs of those parties voted for the amendments to the Marriage Act in 2004.

CDP: “Marriage between a man and woman only” At http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Policy – “Affirming and defending the institution of marriage as being a union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life”
http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/THEFAMILY_000.pdf

Liberal/Nationals: Proposed the Marriage Amendment Act in 2004 to ensure that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

Labor: Voted for the Marriage Amendment Act in 2004. However there is no specific statement affirming marriage in their Platform – they say they will “Not create schemes that mimic marriage or undermine existing laws that define marriage as being between a man and a woman.” ALP National Platform, Ch 13, No 16. However the ALP supports Relationship Registers (see below).

Democrats: The Democrats opposed the Marriage Amendment Act. In June 2006, Democrat Senators Natasha Stott Despoja and Andrew Bartlett introduced legislation into the Senate aimed at reversing this discriminatory measure.” Policy: “Rights of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex people”. At http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Attorney_GLBTI_2007.pdf

Greens: Opposed Marriage Amendment Act. Policy: “The Australian Greens want the legalisation of marriage between two consenting adults regardless of sexuality or gender identity.” Sexuality and Gender Identity Policy at http://www.greens.org.au/about/policy/policy.php?policy_id=29

10. Oppose registration of same-sex relationships (State & Federal)

CDP: Does not support a Relationship Register or Civil Unions

Family First: “Family First opposes relationship registers for same-sex couples, because they undermine marriage.” Correspondence from Family First.

Liberal/Nationals: The Liberals and Nationals do not support Relationship Registers or Civil Unions.

Labor: Policy – “Labor will ensure that all couples who have a mutual commitment to a shared life do not suffer discrimination because they are not married. Labor will take action to ensure the development of nationally consistent, state-based relationship recognition legislation that will include the opportunity for couples who have a mutual commitment to a shared life to have those relationships registered and certified. This legislation will:

- Be based on the scheme that has existed in Tasmania since 2004 and that the Victorian government has announced its intention to introduce;
- Not create schemes that mimic marriage or undermine existing laws that define marriage as being between a man and a woman.” ALP Platform: Ch 13, No 16.

At http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf

Kevin Rudd has affirmed this position in correspondence and at the ‘Make it Count broadcast on 9 August 2007: “Our party's policy in response to that is, we do not support the first which is same sex marriage. We do not support the second, which is civil unions. We are, however, prepared to embrace the possibility of relationship registers as they exist at the state level. And I understand that a number of the churches represented here have themselves put forward submissions on this matter as well”.

Democrats: Support full relationship equality and same-sex marriage.
http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Attorney_GLBTI_2007.pdf

Greens: Support a range of measures for ‘relationship equality’ including same-sex marriage. See Sexuality and Gender Identity Policy at http://www.greens.org.au/about/policy/policy.php?policy_id=29

11. Protect children – No overseas adoption by same-sex couples

CDP: “Marriage between a man and woman only – no same-sex adoptions”

http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Oppose the adoption of children by same-sex couples.

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,20664750-5001028,00.html>

Liberal/National: Have announced an intention to legislate to stop overseas adoption by same-sex couples.

Labor: Did not support the proposal to stop overseas same-sex adoption that was included in the Marriage Legislation Amendment Act in 2004. At

<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2004/s1119927.htm>

In 2004, Labor’s policy on same sex reform said “Labor will then amend legislation to remove discrimination against same-sex couples... The only exception to this process is marriage.”

Homosexual activist Rodney Croome says (11 June 2007) ‘After meeting with ALP Shadow Attorney General Joe Ludwig “The ALP’s position remains the same as it was in 2004. It opposes a ban on the adoption of children from overseas by Australian same-sex couples. However, this policy will be reviewed by Labor caucus if and when the matter returns to Parliament.” He also analyses the ALP position on a range of homosexual rights. At

http://www.rodneycroome.id.au/comments?id=2438_0_1_0_C

When asked by the media, “A spokesman for Labor's legal affairs spokesman, Joe Ludwig, said the opposition would examine the bill before deciding whether or not to support it.” (Gay couples face overseas adoption ban, The Age, 2/8/2007. <http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Gay-couples-face-overseas-adoption-ban/2007/08/02/1185648030026.html>)

Kevin Rudd was questioned on this in October 2007 and didn’t answer: “The Labor Leader gave an evasive answer when asked whether a Labor government would make it easier for gay couples to adopt children. "Adoption laws are governed by the states," Mr Rudd said at a TAFE in Sydney's Campbelltown. "There are many things I may think about individual pieces of state legislation and the adoption law practices across the states, as I understand it, are quite different on these matters."

<http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,22635215-1702,00.html>

He avoided addressing the **federal issue of overseas adoptions**.

Democrats: In favour of adoption by same-sex couples. See

http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Attorney_GLBTI_2007.pdf

Greens: Sexuality and Gender Identity Policy: “The Australian Greens want access, regardless of sexuality and gender identity, to adoption, fostering, artificial insemination and in vitro fertilisation procedures.” At http://www.greens.org.au/about/policy/policy.php?policy_id=29 and

<http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=29>

12. No Medicare funding of IVF for singles and same-sex couples

CDP: “Opposes the use of IVF for single women and lesbians. CDP has concerns about the use of IVF due to the low success rate and negative health outcomes.” “Consequently, CDP opposes any Medicare rebate for IVF”. See http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “Family First opposes Medicare funding of IVF for singles and same-sex couples”.

Correspondence from Family First.

Oppose IVF for homosexuals – <http://www.answers.com/topic/family-first-party>

Liberal/Nationals: Senator Guy Barnett (Lib, Tas) recently said that IVF “treatments should only be available to heterosexual couples, either married or in a de facto relationship” and called for the Federal

Government to introduce legislation as soon as possible. See 'We're the victims', Daily Telegraph, 21/9/2007. At <http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,22452530-5001021,00.html> No overall policy at this stage.

Labor: Did not support the Coalition's proposed changes to the Sex Discrimination Act in 2002 which would have restricted access to IVF for lesbians and single women. In an interview, ABC Brisbane, 5/9/2002, Simon Crean said "No, our position is there should not be discrimination in the availability of these practices. That's consistent with the anti-discrimination laws, which have been passed by the Parliament." <http://www.alp.org.au/media/0902/20002079.html>

The current ALP National Platform says: "Labor will provide universal access to fertility advice and control programs and advice on the safe use of contraceptives; fund research into the prevention of infertility and fertility control and ensures that access to assisted reproductive technology programs is not determined by economic circumstances." Ch 10. No 57.
http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf

Democrats: Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy: "Equal rights for all potential parents who want access to assisted reproductive technologies, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation or financial capacity". At http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Heath_Reproductive_2007.pdf

Greens: They want "access, regardless of sexuality and gender identity, to adoption, fostering, artificial insemination and in vitro fertilisation procedures." Sexuality and Gender Identity Policy at http://www.greens.org.au/about/policy/policy.php?policy_id=29

13. Oppose creation and destruction of embryos for research

This matter was the subject of federal legislation in 2002 and 2006. It was given a conscience vote by all parties. In 2006 the creation of embryos for research was allowed.

Voting record:

Family First: Senator Steve Fielding voted against the Bill.

Nationals: 94% voted against (11/12 in HR and 4/4 in Senate voted against Bill)

Liberals: 59% voted against (38/74 in HR and 26/34 in Senate voted against Bill)

Labor: 31% voted against creation of embryos for cloning (16/60 in HR and 11/28 in Senate voted against Bill)

Democrats: 0% against (0/4 in Senate voted against Bill)

Greens: 25% against (3/4 in Senate voted against Bill)

CDP: "CDP opposes any type of research on human embryos that results in their harm or destruction."
http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

14. Life is precious – Oppose abortion

A conscience vote for all parties.

CDP: "The CDP does not believe abortion can be justified under any circumstances as it necessarily involves the loss of innocent human life." Answer to ACL survey.
http://www.cdpwa.org.au/media.php?content_id=91

Family First: "Family First will seek to promote recognition and valuing of the inherent dignity of each human being from conception. In this context, Family First is opposed to the medical procedure of abortion." Abortion policy - http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/ABORTION_000.pdf

Liberal/Nationals: No policy. Conscience vote.

Labor: will "support the rights of women to determine their own reproductive lives, particularly the right to choose appropriate fertility control and abortion"

Democrats: Support abortion. “all women having access to legal, free and safe pregnancy termination services including unbiased counselling where requested.”

http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Heath_Reproductive_2007.pdf

Greens: Support abortion. “women have the right to make informed, supported choices about all aspects of their lives, including sexual identity, health, reproductive health processes, birthing and child-bearing”

15. Legislate to cease Medicare funding of abortion

CDP: “No Medicare rebate should be available for abortion”. And “Withdraw Commonwealth funding for abortions”. http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “Family First would support legislation to end Medicare funding of abortion.”
Correspondence from Family First.

Liberal/Nationals: No proposal to remove Medicare funding for abortion. Some discussion by conservatives in the parties to do so but this has not been acted on.

Labor: No proposal to remove Medicare funding for abortion.

Democrats: No proposal to remove Medicare funding for abortion.

Greens: No proposal to remove Medicare funding for abortion.

16. Prohibit the importation and use of RU 486 abortion pill

This was the subject of a vote in the federal Parliament in 2006. In effect the bill allowed the importation and use of RU 486 by giving the authority to the Therapeutic Goods Administration..

Voting record:

Family First: Steve Fielding voted against the RU 486 Bill.

Nationals: 81% voted against (10/12 in HR and 3/4 in Senate voted against Bill)

Liberals: 57% voted against (38/74 in HR and 23/34 in Senate voted against Bill)

Labor: 18% voted against the Bill (9/60 in HR and 7/28 in Senate voted against Bill)

Democrats: 0% voted (0/4 in Senate voted against Bill)

Greens: 0% voted against (0/4 in Senate voted against Bill)

CDP: “The abortion inducing drug RU 486 should not be imported or manufactured in Australia”.

17. Life is precious – Euthanasia to remain illegal

Considered a ‘conscience vote’.

CDP: “Palliative care services should be more adequately resourced and euthanasia should continue to be illegal.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Andrew Evans: “I did have concerns that the bill may support the cause for euthanasia. As members well know, I am very strongly opposed to euthanasia.”
www.familyfirst.org.au/sa/documents/MedicalTreatmentandPalliativeCareAmendmentBill.pdf

Liberal/Nationals: Kevin Andrews, Liberal, introduced the Euthanasia Laws bill to overturn the NT euthanasia law. No stated policy.

Labor: No policy on euthanasia. Platform, Ch 10, No 62 - Support palliative care and “Labor supports legislative measures to give each person a right to determine, in advance, the sort of medical treatment he or she wishes to receive, or not receive, in the event that their medical condition prevents them from expressing that wish.”

Democrats: “Euthanasia laws should give people who are terminally ill or dying in great distress choice in the timing and manner of their deaths.” They propose “Nationally consistent voluntary euthanasia laws with sophisticated safeguards for end of life decisions based on the following (stated in ,policy) principles...” Also propose ‘Advance Care Directives’. Voluntary Euthanasia Policy at http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Health_Euthanasia_2007.pdf

Greens: “*The Australian Greens believe that older people have the right to live with dignity.*” <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=32>

Letter printed in the Voluntary Euthanasia Research Foundation (pro-euthanasia lobby) Newsletter ‘Deliverance’ (Vol. 6, Spring 2001) **Senator Bob Brown: Leader, Australian Greens.** “I intend to rescind the Andrews Bill. This will involve presenting the Senate with a recession bill.” Senator Bob Brown introduced a euthanasia bill to Parliament in February 2007. Called the ‘Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2007, it would have given “terminally ill citizens the right to ask for help to voluntarily terminate their life in a humane way if there is no hope of remissions.” See <http://www.greens.org.au/campaigns/display.php?campaign=health>

18. Enforce national ban on X Rated DVDs/Videos

CDP: “CDP believes that the X-rated classification for films should be abolished and Commonwealth legislation introduced to prohibit the production and sale of these films in the ACT and the Northern Territory.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “Family First would support legislation to ban X-rated DVDs/videos”. Correspondence from Family First. Support ban on internet pornography. No mention of X-rated films from the ACT. <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policypornography.pdf>

Liberal/Nationals: Ban on pornography in some aboriginal communities. Have not acted against the ACT selling pornography but would have to interfere with ‘states rights’ to do this if no ‘agreement’ was offered by the ACT and NT governments.

Labor: Supported moves regarding pornography in NT aboriginal communities. No reference to overturning ban on X-rated videos from the ACT.

Democrats: No policy to legislate against X-rated DVDs/videos.

Greens: No policy to legislate against X-rated DVDs/videos.

19. Support mandatory ISP filtering of internet pornography

CDP: “CDP affirms that mandatory filtering at Internet service provider level should be introduced to exclude all material which would be classified X or refused classification.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

“Support mandatory filtering of the internet at ISP level to exclude all explicit pornography as well as material which promotes crime, suicide or terrorism”. Festival of Light survey. <http://www.fol.org.au/>

Family First: “FAMILY FIRST supports the Government's National Filter Scheme but is disappointed the Government has failed to deliver mandatory filtering at the Internet Service Provider (ISP) level”. <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policypornography.pdf>

Liberal/Nationals: Have introduced a filter program and policing. Did not support ISP filtering.

Labor: No support for ISP level filtering.

Democrats: No proposal to have ISP filtering of the internet.

Greens: No proposal to have ISP filtering of the internet.

20. Strengthen ACMA & enforce moral standards on TV & Radio

CDP: “CDP believes that the R18+ classification should exclude any depiction of actual sex or any implied depictions of sex with children. . . As industry self-regulation is not working, CDP supports the introduction of a new scheme with greater enforcement powers. CDP believes that the standards for television and radio content should be rigorously enforced with significant penalties for breaches, including loss of license, imposed by the appropriate authority. . . CDP affirms also that standards for television and radio should take account of the potential that exists to influence children, and therefore reflect and support the values of Australian families.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Have opposed programs such as Californication and called for restrictions on content. “But Family First senator Steve Fielding said the complaints process and the industry codes were flawed.” See <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22324820-2902,00.html>

Liberal/Nationals: Some investigation into broadcasting codes but little done to strengthen ACMA powers or raise standards.

Labor: “Labor will ensure that television and radio advertising are properly regulated and that community standards are reflected in the regulatory approach. . . Labor is committed to ensuring that the Australian Communications and Media Authority is adequately resourced and has sufficient regulatory powers to ensure the maintenance of appropriate community standards in broadcasting material.” Platform, p 281. However this does not mean they will implement stronger moral codes.

Democrats: No proposal to strengthen ACMA to improve standards on TV.

Greens: No proposal to strengthen ACMA to improve standards on TV.

21. Preserve free speech: Oppose religious/sexuality vilification laws

CDP: Oppose vilification laws.

Family First: Oppose vilification laws.

Liberal/Nationals: Oppose religious vilification laws. At the National Day of Thanksgiving service in 2004, Peter Costello said they are “bad law”. NDOT, May 2004
<http://www.treasurer.gov.au/tsr/content/speeches/2004/007.asp>

The Coalition has also consistently opposed such vilification laws based on sexuality – as introduced by the Democrats.

Labor: Platform Ch 13, No 12. “Labor recognises the right of all people to live and work in an environment free from vilification or harassment, and will provide an accessible and effective means for all people to protect themselves from such behaviour.”
http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf

Prior to the 2004 election, Nicola Roxon told the National Marriage Forum: “As an example of some of the steps that we’re going to take is we are committed to introducing religious and racial anti-vilification laws...” When this was not well received, Labor backed off somewhat but the policy remains.

At ‘Make it Count’, Kevin Rudd was asked about religious vilification laws. He was evasive in his response, saying: “So if there are better forms and better mechanisms for protection available through the law in the future, can I say this? We will do so in complete consultation and partnership with the Christian community on the way through.” Make it Count transcript, Page 63 at
http://www.acl.org.au/pdfs/load_pdf_public.pdf?pdf_id=85&checksum=63b2d6628f79406ef360b87cca68ed31

Democrats: Propose sexuality vilification laws. “The Democrats believe that all Australians have a right to equality under the law and in dealings with government, and should be protected from discrimination and vilification on the grounds of sexuality, transgender identity or intersex status.” Policy: “Rights of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex people”. At
http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Attorney_GLBTI_2007.pdf

Greens: Vilification: Support sexuality vilification laws. “Legal and social environments free from harassment, abuse, vilification, stigmatisation, discrimination, disadvantage or exploitation on the basis of sexuality or gender identity.” <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=29>

Regarding religious vilification laws, in 2004 their Human Rights policy said “Work to condemn the vilification and racial profiling of any and all communities, especially minorities, within Australia.” <http://www.greens.org.au/ploneprint/allpolicies.pdf>

Their policy NOW says they “support education and other programs that seek to eliminate racism, promote belonging and encourage connection between people.” See <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=53>

The Victorian Greens last year decided not to support religious vilification laws and the federal policy appears to have been altered to reflect that decision.

22. Keep our freedom - Oppose a Bill or Charter of Rights

CDP: “The CDP does not support the concept of a catch-all Bill of Rights.” See response to ACL survey posted on CDP WA website at http://www.cdpwa.org.au/media.php?content_id=91

Family First: No support for such Charters.

Liberal/Nationals: Oppose a Bill of Rights.

Labor: “Labor will initiate a public inquiry about how best to recognise and protect the human rights and freedoms enjoyed by all Australians”. ALP Platform, Chapter 13, Nos 7-9 http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf (Also see Kevin Rudd’s response at Q 21.)

Democrats: “Australia is the only common law country without a Bill of Rights. The Australian Democrats are committed to rectifying this situation. We have long advocated the introduction of a Bill of Rights to provide a basic safety-net for the protection of human rights.” http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Attorney_DomesticHumanRights_2007.pdf

Greens: “will adopt Australia’s international human rights obligations into domestic law and enact an Australian Bill of Rights.” <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=39>

23. Allow religious bodies free choice in who they employ

CDP: “CDP supports the right of Christian schools to continue to teach Christian doctrine in their curriculum (for example Creation) and to freely choose the staff they wish to employ.” And “The CDP will strongly resist any attempt to prevent religious schools from discriminating in the selection of staff or students according to their school ethos.” http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Not supportive of discrimination laws.

Liberal/Nationals: Have not supported anti-discrimination laws based on sexual preference for employment and other areas. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/gay_lesbian/index.html#sexual

Labor: P 8 - Platform “equal opportunity and protection from unfair discrimination”. P 288 “elimination of discrimination and exploitation on the grounds of class, race, sex, sexuality, religion, political affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, regional location, economic or household status”. P 102, “Non-discrimination will continue to be a central tenet of Labor’s industrial relations policy.”

Democrats: Fully support anti-discrimination laws.

Greens: Fully support anti-discrimination laws.

24. Reject heroin trials and drug injecting rooms

CDP: Supports “The closure of the Sydney-based medically supervised injection centre”.
http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “FAMILY FIRST opposes policies such as giving free heroin to addicts, opening injecting rooms across the country and abolishing penalties for possessing drugs, as these all send the wrong message”. <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policyillegaldrugs.pdf>

Liberal/Nationals: Do not support heroin trials or injecting rooms.

Labor: National Drug Strategy, Platform, Ch 10. No 87 - 98. “Central to Labor’s drug strategy are the principles of prevention of onset of drug use, early intervention and harm minimisation for all illicit drugs. ... Labor will work with the States and Territories to develop and implement a comprehensive framework of strategies to address the diverse problems caused by illicit drugs. The focus of the strategies will be prevention of onset of illicit drug use, early intervention and reducing the harm caused by illicit drugs. These strategies will include: developing and implementing comprehensive anti-drug community and education... research based trials of alternative pathways to treat, manage and recover from drug dependence”. At http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/2007_national_platform.pdf

HOEWEVER the Platform then states that the ALP program will include “state government initiatives, such as supervised injecting places”. P 191.

Democrats: “The Australian Democrats do not endorse illegal drug use but recognise that drug use is an undeniable part of many people’s lives.” They talk about reducing harm and increasing the number of treatment programs available. However they want to: ”introduce a regulatory framework for the prescription of pharmaceutical cannabis for therapeutic purposes.” And “continue investment in needle and syringe exchange programmes and support medically supervised injection centres where needed”. And “with research into medical prescription of heroin in some circumstances”.

Illicit Drugs Policy at http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Heath_IllicitDrugs_2007.pdf

Greens: *Drugs, Substance Abuse and Addiction policy:* “increase the availability of harm reduction programs, including needle and syringe exchanges and medically supervised injecting rooms, and implement a rigorous scientific trial of prescribed heroin to registered users, in line with the proposed 1996 ACT Government heroin trial.” See <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=23>

25. Zero tolerance - Oppose decriminalization of all illicit drugs

CDP: Do not support decriminalisation of illicit drugs. “CDP supports a policy of “zero tolerance” of illicit drugs and endorses the goal of a drug-free society. This approach has proven to be successful in Sweden.” At http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: Do not support decriminalisation of illicit drugs. “FAMILY FIRST believes we have to send the strongest message that drugs are dangerous, that drug use will never be tolerated and that drug use will be punished”. <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policyillegaldrugs.pdf>

Liberal/Nationals: Do not support decriminalisation of illicit drugs

Labor: “Labor realises that an effective illicit drug strategy must address all areas of drug use and have prevention, early intervention and harm minimisation as its underpinning philosophy.” NO specific mention of decriminalising illicit drugs but no statement opposing it either.

However since they support injecting rooms and heroin trials, these do provide a legal place to use illegal drugs – where the police cannot act – this is tantamount to ‘legalising’ those drugs.

Democrats: “The Australian Democrats do not endorse illegal drug use but recognise that drug use is an undeniable part of many people’s lives... The objective of drug policy must be to discourage drug use and to lessen the harmful effects of drugs on health, society and the economy.” Illicit Drugs Policy at http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Heath_IllicitDrugs_2007.pdf

Same comment re supporting injecting rooms etc.

Greens: Drugs, Substance Abuse and Addiction policy: “The Australian Greens do not support the legalisation of currently illegal drugs”. <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=23>

However since they support injecting rooms and heroin trials, these do provide a legal place to use illegal drugs – where the police cannot act – this is tantamount to ‘legalising’ those drugs.

26. Promote abstinence-based programs for drug rehabilitation

CDP: “CDP disagrees with the concept of “harm minimisation”. The CDP “supports legislation that will provide easily accessible treatment, aimed at abstinence”. http://www.cdp.org.au/fed/policy_federal.asp

Family First: “FAMILY FIRST wants more funding for residential rehabilitation programs” and “FAMILY FIRST wants further research into alternate therapies such as Naltrexone and more promotion of successful 12-step grassroots programs modelled on Alcoholics Anonymous.” Both of these are abstinence-based. <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policyillegaldrugs.pdf>

Liberal/Nationals: Provided support for abstinence based programs. ‘Tough on Drugs’ strategy promotes abstinence-based programs.

Labor: Will “implement a national drugs strategy to prevent the onset of use, intervene early and minimize the harm caused by legal and illegal drugs.” Platform, p 153. “Increase the opportunities for treatment and harm reduction for people with drug problems” P 170.

Democrats: Support “more funding for treatment and support and rehabilitation services” but no mention of abstinence; they endorse ‘harm minimisation’.
http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Heath_IllicitDrugs_2007.pdf

Greens: “a harm minimisation approach is the best way to reduce the negative effects of drug use and drug regulation. Harm minimisation policies and programs are those directed towards reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences of drug use, to the individual user and the community.” And “Increase the availability of harm reduction programs, including needle and syringe exchanges and medically supervised injecting rooms, and implement a rigorous scientific trial of prescribed heroin to registered users, in line with the proposed 1996 ACT Government heroin trial.” At <http://greens.org.au/election/policy.php?policy=23>

27. Support greater care of God's environment

All Parties support care for the environment – however each Party has different proposals for doing so.

*Compiled by Salt Shakers Research and Information Services, a unit within Salt Shakers Inc
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