THE IMPACT OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AUSTRALIA
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We believe that all people should be treated with respect regardless of their sexuality or other defining personal characteristics. Those on both sides of the same-sex marriage debate should be accorded dignity and their opinions valued. Unfortunately, throughout the debate, we have seen little respect for those with traditional views of marriage and the family.

Fairness for all sides should have been the mantra adopted by all politicians and opinion-makers during the same-sex marriage plebiscite. However, with the passing of the Dean Smith legislation, the views of SSM proponents were adopted entirely by the parliament, and the concerns of traditionalists were virtually ignored.

Senator Smith’s bill did little to protect religious liberty and nothing to protect freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. It did much to enshrine in our culture the promulgation of radical gender theory that will ultimately lead to the breakdown of those values which hold our society together.

We are particularly troubled by the disingenuous claims of the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader during the plebiscite that they both supported religious freedom and that we, the voting public, should not be worried about the Smith bill passing into law.

They said that the bill was simply about “love and equality” and that there would be no consequences for religious liberty from same-sex marriage. This showed a disregard for logic, ignoring the principles of assessment that apply to every other parliamentary bill.

All legislation that enters the Australian parliament carries consequences. The Smith bill, more than many others, will have far-reaching implications. The potentially negative outcomes were never sincerely evaluated by our political leaders and their same-sex marriage supporters in and outside parliament.

We also express apprehension that the current “Religious Freedom Review”, to which this paper is directed, appears to be window dressing, designed in the midst of the plebiscite to kick the can down the road and assuage naïve voters that their concerns about religious liberty restrictions would be addressed. In reality, the review can do little to protect religious liberty because parliamentarians will no longer be able to vote according to their consciences if and when any religious protection bills reach the floors of federal parliament. Labor and Green MPs, in particular, will be forced to vote in a block against many, if not all, religious freedom bills.

Nevertheless, our religious freedoms not only need to be restored, but a mechanism needs to be in place so that they are preserved under law for decades to come. Therefore, in the hope that parliamentarians who have any regard for fundamental freedoms will fight to
ensuring religious values are protected, we list below thirteen consequences of same-sex marriage if nothing is done to safeguard religious liberty in future federal and state legislation. Parliamentary bills must be introduced that ensure that these consequences do not eventuate either now or, more surreptitiously, at some point in the future. For real-life examples of some of these consequences, the Expert Panel on Religious Freedom should refer to page 4.

**Thirteen Consequences of Same-Sex Marriage if Religious Freedom is Not Protected by Federal and State Legislation**

1. **CHURCH SCHOOLS**: Faith-based schools will not only be denied the right to teach their views of traditional marriage and sexuality, but they will be actively forced to teach views in favour of same-sex marriage and transgenderism to their students. This will be done in the name of an anti-bullying agenda but will have far more sinister purposes. To enforce the “progressive” view on same-sex marriage and transgenderism, church schools which do not conform will have their government funding withdrawn.

2. **UNIVERSITIES**: There is already a deep-seated antipathy towards traditional religious views on university campuses, something engendered by students, academics and administrators alike. This ideological antipathy will transform into institutionalised discrimination under existing same-sex marriage legislation. For example, it will be impossible to create faith-based clubs on campuses without being required to let people become members who oppose the club’s beliefs about the family and human sexuality. Similarly, expressing such views as groups or individuals on campuses will be forcefully proscribed, as exemplified by this event at the University of Sydney during the same-sex marriage plebiscite: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQJs0EmEDTk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQJs0EmEDTk)

3. **MINISTERS OF RELIGION**: If ministers of religion publicly teach their Church’s views opposing homosexual behaviour, they will be subject to sanction by the law. Any congregational setting where non-adherents may attend would be considered “public”. Ultimately, community values will deteriorate to the point that ministers of religion who function as legal marriage celebrants will be required by law, or so ostracised by severe community sanctions, to perform same-sex marriages.

4. **STAFF HIRING BY RELIGIOUS BODIES**: Faith groups, their schools, charities, hospitals and administrative offices will be required to hire staff whose personal views and life choices do not necessarily reflect the fundamental social and spiritual values of their employer. This will restrict the capacity of the organisation to project a clear, unadulterated message to the faith’s adherents and others. Given that anti-discrimination legislation exempts political parties from having to hire employees who do not subscribe to their philosophy (eg. Greens MPs are not forced to hire Liberal Party voters), so should churches and church-owned organisations be exempt from hiring staff whose views and/or lifestyles contradict the faith’s teachings.

5. **MARRIAGE CELEBRANTS**: Marriage celebrants who have religious views will be coerced to provide marriage services to same-sex couples unless they register as a “religious celebrant”. This is even though they may only be exercising a conscientious objection to same-sex marriage and nothing else. In any event, forcing civil celebrants to describe themselves as “religious”, when they are not in fact offering a religious ceremony, is
contradictory and misleading. It is also harmful to their business enterprise if they intend to provide non-religious services to the public.

6. **TOILETS IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER PUBLIC VENUES**: Schools will be required to allow any person identifying with a gender that is different to their biological sex to use the toilet of their choice. The same will apply in community-provided facilities. This will create a risk for young girls and women who cannot defend themselves against larger and stronger biological males. Paedophiles, under the guise of an alternative gender, could have free entry into private spaces where girls and women should feel safe and secure.

7. **CHARITIES AND TAX**: Church-based charities will lose their tax-free status if their teachings, employment practices and internal culture do not align with the same-sex marriage and transgender culture of the “progressive” community.

8. **CAKE-MAKERS ET AL**: Prosecution will result when a retail provider, such as a flower arranger or cake maker, declines to produce a product which overtly promotes homosexuality. For example, although a cake-maker would be well within their rights to refuse to bake a cake that has a far-right racist message, such freedoms will be denied to them if they decline to bake a cake with an overtly homosexual message.

9. **LANGUAGE**: Heteronormativity will be prohibited or restricted in the raising of children and the customs we employ to differentiate the sexes. For example, this will lead to the legislated requirement that gender-neutral pronouns, such as “ze” and “zir”, must be used in public settings, and especially in schools and universities.

10. **LGBTIQ AND TRANSGENDER PROPAGANDA**: Safe Schools-type LGBTIQ and transgender propaganda, and the validity of gender fluidity, will become a mandatory part of the curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools. This is already the case, in part, in Victoria and is moving in this direction in some other states. However, with the advent of same-sex marriage, the promulgation of this ideology will be turbo-charged and mainstreamed into the school curriculums across all subject lines, in every state of the Commonwealth. This particularly will apply as progressive governments replace conservative regimes.

In making the program compulsory in state schools, state governments will deny parents a say in their children’s education. They will repudiate parents’ fundamental right to withdraw their children from classes which teach concepts that they deem to be age-inappropriate and destructive to their religious values. Nor can the Federal Government simply wash its hands of this by saying it is a state issue. It is not. By legislating for same-sex marriage, the government has opened a door that progressive state administrations will walk through to promote to schoolchildren alternative lifestyles that contradict their parents’ convictions; lifestyles which their parents believe will lead to social degradation and personal misery.

- For admissions on the true intent of the Safe Schools program by one of its founders see here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5uNocBCw3Q&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5uNocBCw3Q&feature=youtu.be).
11. **HOUNDING FROM EMPLOYMENT**: Public advocates for traditional marriage, or members of organisations that promote traditional marriage, will be hounded from public office or paid employment by LGBTIQ activists. Attempts to do so after the first TV ad by the *Coalition for Marriage* during the plebiscite were a sign of things to come. Further significant examples are shown below. Regular members of the public who express a view on social media that favours traditional marriage could be dismissed from employment even though those views have been expressed outside their workplace.

12. **ADOPTION**: While there have already been many examples of those with traditional religious beliefs not being able to adopt or foster children, this will become even more deeply entrenched after same-sex marriage ideology is embedded in society.

13. **HATE SPEECH**: Those who favour traditional marriage will be marginalised by society. Suggesting in public forums that natural marriage is superior to same-sex marriage, or the only true or real form of marriage, will be rendered a form of hate speech. It will also be rendered as hate speech to claim that children of same-sex couples will not have the right to the distinctive contributions to their lives of their biological mother or father. A child who repeats in class the traditional marriage opinions of their parents could be punished for doing so by school administrators, as could their parents. Ultimately, commentary which disfavours homosexual activity will be banned at all levels of society. See this link for an attempt to do so during the plebiscite: [http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/council-scrutiny-for-churches-on-rainbow-flag-dissent/news-story/cc6c197c35f34a97b785fdc05799401b](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/council-scrutiny-for-churches-on-rainbow-flag-dissent/news-story/cc6c197c35f34a97b785fdc05799401b).

**Eight Examples of Bullying of Traditional Marriage Proponents**

The following examples provide evidence of the lengths to which same-sex marriage proponents will go to shut down debate and marginalise those with traditional marriage opinions. Hence, the *Expert Panel on Religious Freedom* and parliamentarians would be wise not to blithely dismiss the concerns raised in this document. The panel should work to ensure that citizens with traditional views are not silenced through force or compulsion by militant progressives. Nor should they be silenced more subtly through the simple absence of legislation which protects fundamental rights and freedoms.

1. Brendan Eich, CEO of Mozilla, the owner of the Firefox web browser, was forced from his job by his board in 2014. This was after it was discovered that he had donated $1,000 of his own money to the Yes campaign for California’s *Proposition 8* traditional marriage referendum in 2008. Immediately following the vote, many other donors were publicly “outed” by same-sex marriage lobbyists and violently victimised for their beliefs.

2. In Australia, a member of the board of the allegedly “extreme” Australian Christian Lobby was forced to resign from ACL because his principal employer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, supported same-sex marriage.

3. In Tasmania, the Catholic Archbishop was hauled before the state’s anti-discrimination commission for distributing a brochure supporting traditional marriage to the parents of students in Catholic schools. The case was eventually
dropped, no doubt for strategic reasons with the coming plebiscite, but it took nine
months to do so – an extraordinary attempt to silence the church.

4. The headquarters of the Australian Christian Lobby was bombed by an activist who
said he hated the organisation’s attitude to same-sex marriage (see front page of
*The Australian*, August 17, 2017). Apart from in *The Australian*, this event received
virtually no coverage in other media. Had a pro-SSM lobby group been the subject
of a terrorist attack, it would have received blanket coverage for months.

5. Following Telstra’s statement that it would no longer publicly advocate for same-sex
marriage, the president of Melbourne’s Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Business
and Enterprise (GLOBE), David Micallef, released a statement slamming the telco for
bowing to perceived pressure from the Catholic Church. GLOBE pledged to cancel its
Telstra phone services and no longer accept financial support from the company. A
vociferous campaign by same-sex marriage advocates eventually forced the telco to
reverse its decision.

6. The ultra-Orthodox Jewish Vishnitz girls school in the UK was threatened with
closure in three successive annual reports by the government’s schools standards
body (Ofsted) over its teachings about sexuality and marriage and its refusal to
endorse the validity of homosexual activity. After the issue received extensive
publicity in Australia, the threats were withdrawn and flimsy excuses given by
authorities for this very public attempt to force a private school to promote
alternative lifestyles.

7. Facebook blocked a man who had created a public page for those wishing to vote
“no” on same-sex marriage. It has also blocked posts supporting traditional
marriage. See [http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-21/dickson-the-same-sex-
marriage-post-facebook-deleted/7344990](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-21/dickson-the-same-sex-marriage-post-facebook-deleted/7344990). Similarly, media outlets such as *The
Guardian Australia* openly refused to publish opinions from traditional marriage
proponents about the consequences of same-sex marriage. Hence, the outlet
adopted the curious view that legislating for same-sex marriage carried no
consequences except for those its editors gave their personal blessing. See:
[https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/aug/12/we-wont-be-giving-
equal-time-to-spurious-arguments-against-marriage-equality](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/aug/12/we-wont-be-giving-equal-time-to-spurious-arguments-against-marriage-equality)

8. Ironically, LGBTIQ extremists forced a gay journalist from *The Australian* newspaper
to resign from an LGBTIQ group board. This was because his employer was seen to
be against same-sex marriage because it was reporting both sides of the issue.

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