

**acl**  
australian christian lobby  
voice for values



# [Australia votes]



**KNOW WHAT  
THE PARTIES  
THINK BEFORE  
YOU VOTE!**



**FEDERAL  
ELECTION 2010**

**Party Policy  
Summary  
Booklet**

[australiavotes.org.au](http://australiavotes.org.au)

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# MAKE YOUR VOTE FOR VALUES COUNT!

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The 2010 Federal Election will be held on August 21. You will have to vote on that day but do you know enough about each party to decide which one to vote for? Christians have a responsibility to make a wise and informed vote because, if we want to see good laws made for our country, we need to choose good people and policies at election time.

**To help you make an informed vote, the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) put 24 questions to each of the political parties on key issues of concern to Christians.**

The aim was to highlight the parties' positions on issues of significant interest to Christians, which will not necessarily be prominently discussed in the wider election coverage.

ACL recognises that Christian voters will share many concerns with the general electorate and has tried to avoid duplicating those. Instead this questionnaire aims to reflect the main concerns of this constituency on topics such as refugees, abortion, climate change, marriage, family, indigenous well-being, classification standards, sexualisation of children, religious freedom and chaplaincy.

The answers in this booklet are the bullet-point summaries from each party. More detailed answers are available online at [australiavotes.org.au](http://australiavotes.org.au).

The questionnaire was sent to the major parties contesting the election in late June 2010. Smaller (often single issue) parties were sent the questionnaire as they registered with the Australian Electoral Commission. It was disappointing that the Australian Greens declined to provide answers to many of the questions.

Parties whose answers were not able to be included in the Summary Booklet have their responses posted in full at [australiavotes.org.au](http://australiavotes.org.au).

## Visit the website

If you have Internet access, we encourage you to visit [australiavotes.org.au](http://australiavotes.org.au), where you will be able to read a more detailed answer to each question from each party. This interactive website allows you to compare party policies on the issues you are most concerned about. You can also see how MPs and Senators voted in conscience votes on the abortion drug RU486 and on embryonic cloning during the life of the 2004-2007 Parliament. No conscience votes were held in the 2008-2010 Parliament. The website provides links to more information on each party and suggests ways that you could assist the party of your choice during this election. You can also watch short DVDs explaining the voting system in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

## Meet your candidate forums

The answers to the questionnaire will give you a good idea of what a party thinks on a particular topic but what about the candidates in your electorate? What are they like? What are their values and priorities? ACL will be running Meet Your Candidate Forums, mainly in marginal seats, to give you the opportunity to meet and question the people who are seeking your vote. Visit [australiavotes.org.au](http://australiavotes.org.au) for details of these forums. If there is one in your electorate, we strongly encourage you to attend so you can decide which candidate you prefer. We are also approaching candidates – again in predominantly marginal seats – to upload a short video explaining where they stand on key issues of Christian concern. These will be available at [australiavotes.org.au](http://australiavotes.org.au)

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Authorised by Lyle Shelton, 4 Campion St Deakin ACT, 2600.

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# Public Christianity

## 1. Freedom of Religion:

Australia has a proud record for protecting freedom, but increasingly faith-based organisations and individuals are unduly prevented from giving expression to their religion, or being pressured to act against their conscientiously-held beliefs, particularly in the areas of employment, service delivery, and education. Would your Party ensure that, like political parties, churches and religious bodies have their right to employ staff who share their ethos protected?

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government is committed to the maintenance of freedom of religion and religious expression as fundamental democratic rights.
- There is great diversity of religious beliefs and religious practice in the Australian community and one of our greatest strengths is our respect for the rights and freedoms of others.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Yes we would as it is essential that in a number of employment situations where a religious affiliation, a religious belief, a political philosophy, and social practice would be very important to the ethos of the workplace and that must be protected so that the business ethos and philosophy not be compromised.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition is committed to protecting the right of all people to practise their religion without intimidation or harassment, as long as those practices are within the framework of Australian law.

### Family First

- Yes. Family First would fight to ensure that churches and religious bodies have the right to employ staff that share their ethos.
- At a state level, Family First has already successfully moved amendments to protect church hiring practices and we will continue to fight for these protections into the future.

## 2. Prayer in parliament:

The preamble to Australia's Constitution states that our nation is "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God". Does your Party commit to maintaining the convention of opening Parliament each day exclusively with the Lord's Prayer?

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- Under the Gillard Labor Government there will be no change to the convention of opening Parliament each day with the Lord's Prayer.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Governments have a responsibility to uphold the Christian principles at the root of our national heritage.
- Christian prayers are one way of upholding these principles.
- Parliament should only make use of Christian prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition remains firmly committed to the opening of Parliament exclusively each day with the Lord's Prayer. The Coalition recognises the profound influence that Judaeo-Christian principles have had on the character and ethos of Australian society.
- The Coalition believes the Australian Parliament should represent the society it seeks to serve and that offering the Lord's Prayer each day prior to its deliberations is an appropriate way to do so.

### Family First

- Yes. Family First commits to maintaining the Lord's Prayer at the opening of Parliament.
- Family First is on the record for publicly opposing moves to replace the Lord's Prayer.

# International justice



## 3. Overseas aid:

**Will your Party confirm the current Government commitment to contribute 0.5% Gross National Income to international aid and development efforts by 2015? What timeline will it put in place to reach the internationally agreed target of 0.7% GNI?**

### Australian Greens

- The Greens support increasing Australia's overseas aid budget to the level agreed for developed nations - 0.7 percent of Gross National Income by 2015.
- We also propose that the next government should establish a new Ministry for Overseas Aid and International Development. The Hawke Government had a Minister for Trade and Overseas Development, but it was only in place for one term.

### Australian Labor Party

- Federal Labor remains committed to increasing official development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015-16.
- In the 2010-11 Federal Budget, total Australian official development assistance (ODA) is forecast to increase to \$4.3 billion, up from \$3.8 billion in 2009-10.
- Beyond 2015-16, as economic and fiscal conditions permit, Federal Labor will progressively increase Australia's official development assistance until we reach 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income.

### Christian Democratic Party

- CDP acknowledges Australia's foreign aid is below agreed international standards.
- CDP supports an increase in foreign aid to reach at least 0.70% of GNI by 2015.

- CDP supports overseas aid to Christian organizations that cater for displaced Christians fleeing persecution.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition is fully committed to The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and supports the target of 0.5% of national income in overseas development aid.
- A Coalition government will ensure that Australia's foreign aid effort is focused on real priorities and is rigorously administered. Unlike Labor, we will not fritter away the taxpayer-funded aid budget on frivolous activities such as the funding of consultants' half-million dollar salaries.
- The Coalition supports the UN goal of 0.7% of ODA/GNI ratio as an international aspiration but does not agree with time-bound targets to reach this goal. If our fiscal position improves beyond 2015 we will re-examine our aid budget with a view to reaching the internationally agreed target of 0.7%.

### Family First

- Family First supports the Government's initiative to contribute 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI) to International aid.
- Family First supports calls from the Make Poverty History campaign that the Australian Government should join other OECD countries by committing to a timetable for overseas aid as a proportion of GNI of 0.7%.

## 4. Refugees:

**The immigration debate is complex, involving the competing priorities of meeting our moral obligation to offer asylum to genuine refugees, while minimising vulnerability to people smuggling, and ensuring border protection. What measures will your Party take to balance these competing priorities?**

### Australian Greens

- The Greens are committed to a long-term, practical and humane approach to immigration that rejects the failed policies of mandatory detention, detention of children, indefinite detention and off-shore processing.
- Our position is based on the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, to which Australia is a signatory, which states that seeking asylum is not illegal.
- The Greens will: prioritise the timely processing of asylum claims, increase Australia's humanitarian intake and introduce a new visa subclass for people displaced by climate change.

### Australian Labor Party

- Federal Labor's view is that strong border security and fair and decent asylum seeker policies are not incompatible.
- The Gillard Labor Government will work with our regional neighbours and with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to develop a regional processing centre for asylum seekers.
- Federal Labor will work towards an effective, sustainable, long term regional solution to deal with the challenge of irregular arrivals.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Australia has a sovereign right to determine who may enter its borders.
- Australia should meet its international obligations to treat unauthorized arrivals humanely and expediently and CDP will support supervised release programs into the community.

- CDP will give priority to refugee applicants who are persecuted for their Christian faith.

## Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition is committed to policies on refugees which are sustainable, orderly and fair to those in desperate situations waiting in refugee camps around the world for asylum in Australia. Coalition border protection policy is based on denying the people smugglers the ability to sell permanent residency to Australia. Any policy that continues to provide an incentive to this business is neither consistent with Australians' expectations of effective border control nor compassionate.
- A Coalition Government will give priority to resettlement of refugees who have made offshore applications to Australia's refugee and humanitarian visa programme. To achieve this goal, the Coalition will increase the number of resettlement places made available through the UNHCR for offshore applications each year by 1,500 persons from 6,000 to 7,500 places within the Refugee and Humanitarian programme of 13,750.
- The Coalition will also pilot the Canadian refugee sponsorship programme to enable groups in Australia to sponsor refugees over and above our regular intake on a fully bonded basis. This programme will be based on temporary and permanent protection visas for refugees in overseas camps. The sponsorship programme will enable community groups, approved by the government, to provide sponsorship to people assessed as refugees by the UNHCR offshore. The pilot will be introduced in the first term of Coalition Government with a view to establishing a permanent programme in a subsequent term. The private sponsorship programme would therefore enable Australia to lift our refugee intake to 15,000 within three years.

## Family First

- Family First recognises that genuine refugees need protection, but also that people smuggling is a particularly insidious business.
- Over 170 people have died at sea trying to reach Australia since recent policy changes made us a more attractive target for people smugglers. Australia needs to be made an unattractive target for people smugglers to reduce this suffering and needless death.
- Children and minorities suffering from intense religious persecution, including Christians in Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, should have their claims for refugee status dealt with swiftly.



## 5. Religious security:

**Many vulnerable people experience intolerable suffering in various countries due to persecution and a lack of religious freedom, often because of laws that forbid practice of non state religions. What would your Party do to encourage apostasy laws to be repealed in such countries, so that people are free to follow their own religious convictions without fear? What else would your Party do to support vulnerable people groups overseas, and respond to specific instances of religious or ethnic persecution?**

### Australian Greens

- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

### Australian Labor Party

- Freedom of religion or belief is a basic right and essential to a harmonious society.
- Federal Labor will call on all states which have not signed or ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to do so, or uphold the rights contained therein.
- Federal Labor's firm position is that the right to freedom of religion must be respected in all countries, in accordance with international human rights law.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Priority to those ready to integrate into Australian way of life.
- Priority to persecuted Christians.
- Immigration denied to those who pose a challenge to our Christian heritage.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition in government would again work hard – both through direct bilateral contacts and through the United Nations – to speak up for those around the world who are persecuted because of their religion, including by advocating the repeal of apostasy laws.

### Family First

- Family First believes that Australia needs to be more active in highlighting abuse and the targeting of minority religions in foreign countries.
- Laws prohibiting religious conversion run contrary to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and should be dealt with by international bodies with Australian support.

# Poverty

## 6. Homelessness and housing affordability:

**According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, on any given night there are approximately 100,000 homeless Australians. What policies will your Party implement to address this problem? How will your Party respond to the issue of housing affordability?**

### Australian Greens

- The Greens believe that everyone should have access to stable, secure, affordable housing.
- We will rebuild the public housing sector and increase the amount of community housing.
- We will implement progressive planning guidelines that require a social mix of housing so at least 20% of new developments include low-cost and public housing and we will review the barriers to housing affordability, including tax concessions.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government has made tackling homelessness a national priority, including a plan for reducing homelessness in Australia, with specific goals to halve overall homelessness by 2020 and provide accommodation to all rough sleepers who seek it by 2020.
- Federal Labor has invested \$4.9 billion in new funding to address homelessness, with an additional \$400 million from the States and Territories.
- Federal Labor's National Rental Affordability Scheme will deliver more than 50,000 additional homes for the rental market in the next few years.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Distribution of GST revenue to the states subject to removal of all state taxes on land and housing.
- Home loan interest payments tax deductible on a means tested basis and up to a determined level and rental assistance for the genuinely unable.
- Reducing demand in capital cities through decentralisation policies.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- Real and practical solutions are required to combat homelessness. To this end, the Coalition will take a lead role in providing enhanced education and training opportunities for young Australians. This support will include increasing and expanding the Education Tax Refund to provide real assistance to parents and help ease pressure on family budgets. Unlike the Government's rebate which is limited to books, computers and uniforms, the Coalition's rebate provides a more enhanced list of claimable items including school fees and levies, excursion costs, tutorial and music lessons as well as books, computers and uniforms. Importantly, the Coalition's rebate is higher than that offered by the Rudd-Gillard Government and starts 1 January 2011 in time for the new school year.
- The Coalition's Real Action Plan for Better Mental Health recognises younger Australians bear the brunt of mental illness. Many of these young people end up on the streets. Evidence shows that with early and targeted intervention treatment, many are able to overcome their problems, return to health and lead socially and economically productive lives. This measure provides

\$1.5 billion towards 20 new Early Psychosis Intervention Centres, 60 additional youth headspace sites and 800 acute and sub-acute early intervention beds. It builds on the Coalition's 2006 investment of \$1.9 billion for services for people with a mental illness, their families and carers. That investment was the biggest investment into mental health of any government in Australian history.

- We are also strongly committed to combating illicit drug use, including the trafficking and distribution of drugs and the provision of treatment services to help people get off drugs. In Government we will give unequivocal support for the fight against the use of illicit drugs and recently announced an additional \$93.1m to increase customs inspections of air and sea ports to crack down on drug importation.

### Family First

- Family First recognises that homelessness is a tragic reality in Australia.
- Homelessness is an area in which community organisations such as the Inter Church Housing Group can be more properly resourced to take a lead, and find lasting solutions when the Government has given up.
- Governments - Federal and State - also have a clear obligation to more appropriately release land for development and train building apprentices to increase housing availability.



## 7. Taxation considerations:

**The 'Henry review' of Australia's taxation system recommended the winding back of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) arrangements. FBT concessions make churches and church-based service-providers in the health, community and welfare sectors more financially viable, ensuring the maintenance of services to some of our most vulnerable people. Would your Party support the retention of FBT concessions for churches and faith-based charities?**

### Australian Greens

- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

### Australian Labor Party

- Federal Labor understands the important role the not-for-profit sector, including churches, plays in supporting thousands of vulnerable Australians.
- In response to the recent tax review, Federal Labor advised

that a number of the recommendations in the review are not Government policy, including those relating to Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT).

- Federal Labor further will not make any changes to the tax system that harms the not-for-profit sector, including removing the benefit of tax concessions.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Much of the Henry tax review is about increasing taxes and little is about the government treating its expenditure with restraint.
- Increasing taxes can not go on forever and so expenditure restraint must come into play.
- We support a restraint on spending and therefore we would not need to touch the fringe benefit taxes. So the answer is a resounding yes we will retain FBT concessions.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- We have no intention of changing the fringe benefit tax laws as they relate to charities. We understand the importance of these concessions to the charitable sector.

### Family First

- Yes. Family First supports the retention of FBT concessions for church and faith-based charities.
- If the exemptions were removed most Christian organisations would be forced to retrench staff.

## Life

### 8. Cloning:

**Given that the scientific basis for ‘therapeutic cloning’ has changed since the Federal Parliament considered cloning in 2006, and that there is now an entirely ethical and uncontentious method to obtain the same specialised stem cells that cloning scientists have never managed to obtain, does your Party support a new conscience vote on laws permitting the creation of cloned human embryos solely for research?**

#### Australian Greens



- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

#### Australian Labor Party

- Legislation regulating the use of excess Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) embryos was amended by the Federal Parliament in 2006. Cloning for human reproductive purposes is prohibited under this legislation.
- The Government is required to undertake a review of this legislation, which will be underway in the near future.
- Any changes to laws regulating the use of human stem cells and embryos – including the need for any strengthening of these laws – will be considered following the completion of the review.

#### Christian Democratic Party

- CDP opposes the harm and destruction of human embryos.
- CDP opposes any further liberalisation of cloning laws as these will only further serve to exploit women and trivialise human life.

#### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Private Members Bill passed in 2006 to permit cloning was the subject of a conscience vote within the Federal Parliament. The Coalition has no intention of further liberalising legislation in regard to cloning.

#### Family First

- Yes. Induced pluripotent stem cell has made the need for stem cell research on aborted embryos unnecessary.
- It is therefore morally imperative that any laws relating to embryonic stem cell research be reconsidered.

### 9. Euthanasia:

**Euthanasia is the intentional killing of a ‘suffering’ patient. Legalised euthanasia alters the social contract with the vulnerable and ‘unwanted’ in society, who will perceive the so-called ‘right to die’ more as a ‘duty to die’, and corrupts the doctor-patient relationship in profound ways. While the vote may be a conscience one, will your Party reject any moves to legalise euthanasia?**

#### Australian Greens

- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

#### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government recognises that euthanasia is a sensitive and complex issue and that members of the community have strong concerns about dying with dignity, compassion and with minimal pain. Those dying of terminal illness, and their families and carers, need the community’s support.
- Euthanasia is unlawful in Australia and Commonwealth laws are consistent with the laws of each State and Territory, which make it an offence to counsel or aid a person to commit suicide.
- The Gillard Labor Government does not propose to amend existing Commonwealth laws or seek changes to State and Territory laws at this time.

#### Christian Democratic Party

- CDP opposes all forms of euthanasia.
- CDP is not opposed to the refusal of burdensome medical treatment when death is inevitable.
- CDP supports quality palliative care to alleviate suffering.

## Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- Unlike the Labor Party, the Coalition holds that the right of a Member or Senator to vote on matters according to their conscience is a fundamental right of our parties.
- As has occurred in the past, should a Bill concerning euthanasia be presented to the Federal Government in the next Parliament, all members of the Coalition parties, as a matter of principle, would be able to exercise a conscience vote.
- In Government, the Coalition made time for the Andrews bill to be brought forward and debated on. This legislation overturned the NT euthanasia law.

## Family First

- Yes. The Family First Party has consistently opposed all bills that have as their object the legalisation of active euthanasia.
- Family First maintains the position that allowing so-called ‘mercy killing’ or assisted suicide sends the wrong message about the sanctity of life and may result in some elderly Australians feeling that they have a duty to die.

## 10. Abortion:

**The 2007 annual report of the Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity (Victoria) showed that 52 out of 181 late term babies who were aborted for “abnormalities” survived late term abortions but died neo-natally. Would your Party support a conscience vote on Medicare funding for abortions carried out on babies old enough to be viable outside the womb?**

### Australian Greens

- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

### Australian Labor Party

- Regulation of late-term abortion is a matter for States and Territories.
- The Australian Labor Party supports conscience votes on issues before the federal parliament which relate to abortion.

### Christian Democratic Party

- We allow a conscience vote on all issues so a resounding YES. Our policy position is to support the rights of the unborn child as we see the unborn child as a person. In fact the UN Charter on human rights gives the same legal rights to the unborn child as to the born child and we hold to this position.
- Our policies do not support abortions and we did call on the federal government to seek to overturn Victoria’s position as we are a signatory to the UN Charter on rights of the child where the same rights are granted to both the born and the unborn child.

## Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition has no plans to change current arrangements in relation to abortion.
- In government, the Coalition established a nationwide Pregnancy Counselling Helpline to provide counselling and referral services to women and their partners who wished to explore their options in the face of unintended pregnancy.

## Family First

- Yes. Family First has raised numerous concerns in Parliaments around Australia regarding late term abortions.
- Family First would support a conscience vote to ban the

Medicare funding of abortion carried out on babies old enough to be viable outside the womb.

## 11. Abortion data:

**There are approximately 80,000 abortions performed in Australia each year, but obtaining accurate figures is fraught by bureaucratic impediments. What will your Party do to obtain more accurate and complete abortion data in line with the cross-party recommendation of the 2008 Senate inquiry into the Health Insurance Regulations?**

### Australian Greens

- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

### Australian Labor Party

- As a Government, we undertook a comprehensive review of maternity services in Australia.
- A recommendation of that review is that the Government, in conjunction with the States and Territories and key stakeholders, agree and implement arrangements for consistent and comprehensive data collection, monitoring and review for maternal and peri-natal mortality and morbidity (which includes abortion).
- Federal Labor is acting on that recommendation by developing a Maternity Services Plan with the State and Territories. In addition to this, Federal Labor is working directly with the peri-natal data experts on improving Australia’s data collections.

### Christian Democratic Party

- The Christian Democratic Party has always valued life and is concerned that each and every death be accounted for correctly. We are very concerned with the death of young children both before birth (abortions and still births) and after birth.
- We will therefore recommend/and or support a Senate inquiry to document all deaths/abortions. The unborn child will be declared a human person from conception and therefore if the unborn child dies its’ death will procedurally and legally need to be reported. This position is based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights as it refers to the rights of the child. The critical wording of that declaration is, “the rights of the child are the same before birth as they are after birth”. This declaration was signed and agreed to by Senator Gareth Evens without amendment or reservations on behalf of the Australian Government.
- We oppose any view that would suggest that the unborn child is not a human person with legal and moral rights that need to be protected.

## Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- On 13 November 2008, the Senate’s Finance and Public Administration Committee tabled a report which noted that concerns had been expressed over the lack of data on abortions in Australia. It made a recommendation that all States and Territories through the Australian Health Ministers Conference work towards providing complete and uniform data for the Perinatal National Minimum Data Set.
- The Coalition supports the current Government’s response which included extra funding over four years for improved maternity data collections as part of its Improving Maternity Services Budget Package 2009-10.

## Family First

- Yes - In Federal and State Parliaments, Family First has fought to obtain better abortion data.

# Youth & Education

## 12. Chaplaincy:

The 2009 research paper, “The Effectiveness of Chaplaincy”, showed that the Federal Government’s National School Chaplaincy Program was supported by more than 97% of the 688 participating school principals, who said that chaplains had been highly effective in providing pastoral care services for students and school communities. Does your Party commit to funding faith-based chaplaincy in schools beyond 2011, and at what level?

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government is providing an additional amount of \$42.8 million to extend the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP), for all participating schools until December 2011.
- A broad consultation process will consider options for possible future pastoral care initiatives following the end of the program in December 2011.
- The Gillard Labor Government is committed to working with school communities, parents and other stakeholders to support the wellbeing and positive development of all Australian school children.

### Christian Democratic Party

- We believe that this program has delivered good outcomes and we would seek to extend it, not only beyond 2011 but even increase its scope to give good counsel to families and students beyond the immediate school community.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- A Coalition Government will make the National School Chaplaincy Programme an ongoing Programme and will continue funding at its present levels - \$165 million over 3 years.

### Family First

- Yes - Recent funding initiatives, supported by Family First, have seen almost 2,000 state schools provided with a chaplain.
- However, to date, about 65% of state schools still do not have access to a school chaplain. Given the vital role that school chaplains play in counselling and mentoring, Family First supports an increase in funding so that a chaplain is available to every school that requests one.

## 13. Youth unemployment:

The national youth unemployment rate is 17% but in some locations it is over 40%. What policies will your Party implement to support and encourage young Australians to engage in active employment?

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.



### Australian Labor Party

- Young people were among the hardest hit by the global recession, but Federal Labor has been working hard to make sure young people get the training and skills they need to get and keep a job.
- The Gillard Labor Government has put in place a range of specific programs to help get young people into jobs including our Learn or Earn policy, Apprentice Kickstart and the National Green Jobs Corps.

### Christian Democratic Party

- There needs to be greater investment in the trades and apprenticeships and for those unable to find work or trades to become involved in, we will create a supported volunteer program to assist in repairing some of the environmental damage that has taken place over the years.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- A Coalition Government will take seriously the principle of Mutual Obligation that has been severely compromised under Labor. The Coalition is determined to have a social security system which encourages people to work and not stay on welfare. We firmly believe that the best form of welfare is a job.
- While general unemployment is low, youth unemployment is very high under the Labor Government. The full time youth unemployment rate of 24.3% (June 2010) is up over 6 % since the Howard government (from 17.4% in June 2007).
- The Coalition knows that the worst thing for young people is to not be actively engaged in work or training. Doing nothing disengages young people from society and locks in patterns of welfare dependency.

### Family First

- The plight of youth unemployment in Australia is an area that Family First devotes much attention.
- Completing Year 12 provides a significant buffer against unemployment, and it has been estimated that early school leaving costs Australia \$2.6 billion per year.
- Further, a fall in recent years in apprenticeships and trade programs has been matched with a rise in youth unemployment. Family First will move aggressively to promote study and apprenticeship programs for youths to address this serious issue.

## 14. National curriculum:

**The national curriculum stresses teaching all subjects from indigenous, Asian and environmental perspectives, but the proposed history curriculum fails to acknowledge the significance of Australia's Judeo-Christian heritage. What actions will your Party take to ensure a more balanced approach to the national curriculum, one that properly recognises Christianity's historical and on-going contribution to Australia's social, political and legal structures? What place, if any, should the Bible have in the national English curriculum, given its status as the most printed and translated literary work, and its obvious effect on the development of Western culture, literature and art?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- Federal Labor has delivered on its 2007 election commitment to deliver Australia's first national curriculum.
- The Gillard Labor Government has established the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to develop a rigorous and world-class Australian Curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12, beginning with the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history. Federal Labor strongly believes that the curriculum should be developed by experts, not politicians.
- In its work to date to develop the Australian Curriculum, ACARA has drawn upon the considerable curriculum expertise in the States and Territories. ACARA has also engaged in extensive consultations with the education community, including parents, teachers, principals, professional organisations, academics and representatives from business and industry.

### Christian Democratic Party

- We do not support the review of history where the Christian input has been downgraded as many of the significant events are to be understood as community leaders' moral convictions moved them to act in the way that history records the events. As the Bible has been significant in the lives of history makers it must be also involved in understanding history and development of moral standards.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition is concerned about key aspects of the proposed new National Curriculum. If elected we will review the National Curriculum and widen the consultative process. We will consider a broader based approach that encourages and fosters choice and diversity.

### Family First

- Family First recognises that Australia has a rich Christian heritage, and acknowledges the Christian foundations of our legal and parliamentary systems.

- It is more than appropriate that children in both public and private schools learn the historical background and story of the Bible.
- It is impossible to understand the history of our Western civilisation without a deep appreciation for the teachings of Christianity. For this reason, Family First supports the teaching of our Christian heritage in our schools.

## 15. School funding:

**Given that many of the students attending low fee independent and Christian schools come from families of a similar socio-economic background as those of public schools, will your Party guarantee that any review of funding for the non-government school sector will result in no reduction in the level of funding in both real and relative terms for these schools?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Education Revolution in this country is well under way. In less than three years the Gillard Labor Government has delivered more for education at every level than the former Coalition Government was able to achieve in more than a decade. We have almost doubled funding for schools in less than three years.
- Federal Labor will conduct a transparent review to inform new funding arrangements for 2013 onwards.
- The Review is not about taking money away from schools. While enrolments will always change and students will move in and out of schools, no school will lose a dollar of funding in the sense that their school budget per student will not reduce in dollar terms.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Yes.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition will continue the existing SES funding model until the end of the quadrennium and beyond. We will consult on how to enhance the model in the lead up to the new agreement in 2013.
- The Coalition will also preserve the funding maintenance and funding guarantee provisions that exist for non-government schools in the SES model.

### Family First

- Yes - Family First strongly supports the Christian and independent school sector - as well as home schooling parents.
- Family First will work to ensure that there is no reduction in the level of funding in both real and relative terms for these schools.



# Family

## 16. Marriage:

**Marriage is clearly defined in the Marriage Act as the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life. Would your Party commit to support this definition for the life of the Government and beyond?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the Australian Labor Party remain committed to maintaining the definition of marriage as currently set out in the Marriage Act as being between a man and a woman.
- Federal Labor has introduced reforms to remove discrimination from 85 Commonwealth laws. The reforms remove discrimination in areas of Commonwealth activity including taxation, social security, health, aged care, superannuation, immigration, child support and family law.
- These reforms extend to same-sex couples the same entitlements and obligations that apply to opposite sex couples. Equal treatment means some same-sex couples will get access to benefits they could not previously access.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Yes, we are totally opposed to “same sex” so-called Marriage.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition Government acted in 2004 to define in legislation that marriage is ‘the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life’.

### Family First

- Yes. Marriage is between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.
- Family First opposes homosexual marriage.
- In redefining families and who a child’s parents are, radical legislation is putting long standing protections for children at risk.

## 17. Parenting:

**Now that a paid parental leave scheme has been legislated and will begin operation on 1 January 2011, what policies will your Party implement to redress the inequality in Government support experienced by women who work exclusively in the home?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government values the hard work of mothers regardless of whether they are in paid work or not.
- Federal Labor will continue to support families to make their own work and family choices.

### Christian Democratic Party

- We would support fairer treatment for women who work exclusively from home, especially in their child rearing and care priorities.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition would like to give stay-at-home mums a better deal but currently the priority is getting Labor’s debt and deficit down.

### Family First

- Family First opposed measures in the recent parental leave legislation that discriminated against ‘stay at home’ mums.
- Many parents wish to take an extended period off from work following the birth of a child, and this can benefit the child’s development.
- Family First will continue to fight to end discrimination against stay at home mums in terms of financial benefits provided.

## 18. Surrogacy and ART:

**The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) intends to achieve uniform national surrogacy law. Some States allow surrogacy for single people and same-gender couples to obtain a child, who then has no possibility of having both a mother and a father. In constructing nationally consistent surrogacy laws, will your Party oppose any provision for single and same-gender surrogacy?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- State and Territory governments have responsibility for surrogacy laws. The Australian Government supports States and Territories working together to create nationally consistent laws as far as this is possible.

- The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) has recently agreed to model provisions and model principles for jurisdictions to apply in this area.
- These principles and provisions are gender neutral. This means that it is up to individual jurisdictions to determine how to regulate surrogacy by same-sex couples, which the Australian Government believes is appropriate.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Every child is entitled to a father and mother.
- Children are not commodities that can be acquired by commercial means.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition believes that, all things being equal, children should have the opportunity for the care and affection of a father and mother.
- States and Territories are responsible for the provision and regulation of health and medical care and treatment.
- While at present, the Federal Government does not have comprehensive powers to legislate with respect to IVF, Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) or surrogacy, the Coalition will not support any measure which might open the door or otherwise give legitimacy to same-sex adoption, same-sex IVF or same-sex surrogacy.”

### Family First

- Yes. Family First will oppose any provision for single and same-gender surrogacy.
- Family First considers the wellbeing of any child born as a consequence to surrogacy laws to be the paramount consideration.
- In recent state Reproductive Technology legislation the Government attempted to change the law so that the rights of the child being born through IVF would be diminished. Family First lodged an amendment, which passed, successfully restoring this important children’s right.

# Sexualisation of children

## 19. Classification:

**There are a number of Codes of Practice across a range of media platforms, with some types of media self-regulated, others falling under the scope of the ACMA or the Classification Board. This multiplicity of media regulation is ill-equipped to keep pace with rapid technological changes, lacks effective enforcement mechanisms, and leaves children vulnerable to harm from inappropriate media products. Will your Party commit to a comprehensive review of Australia’s media regulatory environment, with a view to establish an effective classification system across all media, including advertising and games?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- Labor considers that the current classification system provides a valuable guide to Australians.
- A Gillard Labor Government would work with States and Territories to ensure our classification system keeps pace with technological change to maintain the community’s confidence.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Self regulation is not working, a new scheme is required.
- Serious breaches should result in loss of license for the broadcaster.
- Standards for TV and radio should take account of the potential that exists to influence children.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition believes that our current classification system is broken and is inappropriately applied in many instances.
- A Coalition Government will review the current system, building on the work of the 2008 Senate Inquiry. This review will be tasked with developing a new way of ensuring that proper community standards are applied to all media. We do not believe that a laissez faire approach is appropriate in this area.
- The Coalition believes that the classification system must take into account the new technologies available to deliver content to children, young people and adults and develop a comprehensive new framework that looks at the content, and not just the platform it is delivered over, when determining its appropriateness.

### Family First

- Yes.
- Family First will continue to work towards restriction of violent and pornographic material.
- Family First commits to a comprehensive review of the media regulatory environment - provided that such a review has the objective of strengthening rather than weakening the classification framework.



## 20. Internet safety:

**Recent Government trials have shown that blocking Refused Classification (RC) material at the ISP level is technically feasible. Will your Party commit to the filtering of RC material at the ISP level to provide a safer internet environment for children? Some ISPs already provide commercial filtering products for parents to protect children from legal but**

**otherwise harmful internet content. What would your Party do to encourage wider availability of such services?**

### Australian Greens

- **THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.**

### Australian Labor Party

- Our Cyber-Safety Plan includes education, law enforcement, research and mandatory Internet Service Provider (ISP) filtering of Refused Classification content.
- We will introduce mandatory ISP level filtering of content that is rated Refused Classification (RC) and have also introduced a grants program to encourage ISP's to offer additional level filtering services to households who want them.
- Federal Labor welcomes the decision of three of our largest Internet Service Providers to voluntarily block, at the ISP level, a list of child abuse URLs compiled and maintained by the independent regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Yes we fully support the filtering of RC material at the ISP level to protect children.
- Self regulation is not working, a new scheme is required.
- Serious breaches should result in loss of license for the broadcaster.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition supports sensible and workable measures to protect children from illegal or inappropriate online content.
- As a matter of principle, we support ways to protect young people from content which it is illegal for them to access.
- The Coalition will continue to assess, monitor and test improvements in technology which may enhance online safety. But ultimately it will be a range of measures – such as strong and well funded online policing, support for teachers and parents, international cooperation and technology options that will keep our children safe in the online world.

### Family First

- Family First was one of the first groups to begin the campaign for tighter regulation of RC material.
- Family First recognises that parents need the option of filtering online content from their children that is objectionable, pornographic, or dangerous.
- Family First recognises that filtering of content is one element in a range of tools needed to protect children.



# Environment

## 21. Climate change:

**The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted devastating effects of climate change on the global environment and population. At the same time a body of contrary scientific evidence is beginning to emerge in the debate. What is your Party's position on climate change, and what are the policies it plans to implement on that basis, including for the world's poorest?**

### Australian Greens

- Australia must contribute fairly to the critical global challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- This means we need an emission target of between 25 and 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, as well as a range of policies to ensure we meet it.
- In 2009 the Greens introduced the Safe Climate Bill - a collection of 12 bills based around the pillars of renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean transport and forest protection, supported by an environmentally effective and economically efficient carbon pricing scheme.

### Australian Labor Party

- Climate change is real and we need to build a community consensus about putting a price on carbon in the future.
- Julia Gillard and Labor are already taking real action to increase the use of renewable energy and reduce our carbon emissions.
- Federal Labor is implementing the Water for the Future Plan, including the first ever purchase of water entitlements by the Federal Government to restore the health of the Murray-Darling System.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Environmental issues are important and must be managed responsibly.
- The media reporting on climate change has been biased and does not cover those scientists who challenge popular climate change assumptions.
- CDP will not commit itself to any course of action that is certain to damage economic prosperity if the hoped-for benefits to the environment are uncertain or disproportionately costly.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition has a direct action policy on the table ready to be implemented. It does not involve further talkfests or delay. The Coalition will go to this election with a detailed and costed plan outlining how we intend to reduce Australia's emissions and delivering broader environmental benefits for all Australians.
- In addition, a Coalition Government will fund a standing green army of up to 15,000 people that will be available on an ongoing basis and supplemented by volunteers to tackle the local and regional environmental priorities that most urgently require the sustained application of labour.

### Family First

- Family First is opposed to the current Commonwealth Emissions Trading bill.
- Family First does support increased investment and research into alternative energy generation.



# Justice

## 22. Sharia law:

**In 2009 the Islamic Council of Victoria rebuffed an attempt by one of its board members to propose the establishment of a Sharia court to handle disputes in the Muslim community over divorce, child access, wills and the like. Would your party commit to opposing the adoption of a parallel Sharia Law legal system within Australia?**

### Australian Greens

- THE GREENS DECLINED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government does not support the introduction of Sharia law in Australia.
- The Gillard Labor Government is not contemplating the introduction of alternative dispute resolution based on Sharia principles.
- The Gillard Labor Government believes secular law remains separate from religious law and is intended to apply to everyone equally.

### Christian Democratic Party

- We support one law for all and we will do all we can to prevent any other legal system being established in Australia.
- We are committed to oppose Sharia Law and Sharia law courts in Australia. This would include the establishment of Shari loans/finance as this will be an entry point for the need for special courts for disputes in this area.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition will not alter the current law, according to which it is quite legal for any religious body to establish its own tribunal to determine purely internal matters, for example the appointment to religious offices or the resolution of doctrinal matters.
- However, the Coalition will not countenance the creation of a parallel court system with the power to make determinations affecting the broader rights of individuals or property interests and, in particular, any parallel system that conflicts with domestic legislation.
- The Coalition makes it very clear that we reject any introduction of sharia law into Australia.

## Family First

- Yes – It is inappropriate for two parallel legal systems to be operating in Australia.
- Family First would strongly oppose the introduction of a Sharia Law system, or any other parallel legal system in Australia.

## 23. Human Rights Act:

**The National Human Rights Consultation recommended the enactment of a federal Human Rights Act. However many Christian churches and groups opposed a HRA because of little evidence of overseas versions improving human rights and their being used by activists to undermine freedom of religion. Given the time and expense of assessing Parliament's present position on the HRA, will your Party rule out introducing a Human Rights Act or equivalent instrument in the next and subsequent parliament?**

### Australian Greens

- The Greens support a Charter of Rights which would adopt Australia's international human rights obligations into domestic law.
- The Government's Human Rights Framework is a welcome step in the right direction but the government has ignored the key recommendation of the Human Rights Consultation Report by refusing to consider a Human Rights Act.
- Without this human rights in Australia will continue to be dealt with in an ad hoc manner.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government has no intention of introducing a Charter of Human Rights.
- The Gillard Labor Government has introduced the Human Rights Framework announced in April 2010 which contains positive and practical measures to improve human rights protection in Australia, with education as the centrepiece.

### Christian Democratic Party

- Charter of Rights are too broadly worded and imprecise.
- They place too much power in the hands of the judiciary.
- Any serious human rights infringements can be addressed without the need for a Bill of Rights.

### Coalition – Liberal and National Parties

- The Coalition is opposed to the enactment of a federal Human Rights Act but would support in its place a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to provide greater scrutiny of legislation from a human rights point of view.

## Family First

- Yes – Family First opposes a Bill or Charter of Rights because it gives power to unelected judges and Commissioners to make the law.
- For these reasons, Family First has successfully blocked expansions of state Equal Opportunity Tribunals that would have (for example) allowed the Commissioner to launch investigations of Churches even when no complaint has been made.

# Indigenous Issues



## 24. Indigenous welfare:

**Social justice for indigenous people remains a major issue for Christian churches. What initiatives and policies would your Party introduce to ensure not only better health, housing, education and employment opportunities for indigenous Australians, but also to facilitate long-term social inclusion and a sense of hope and purpose for the first Australians? What would your Party do during the next term of Parliament to specifically address these goals?**

### Australian Greens

- The Greens believe greater investment into Indigenous community controlled organisations with a proven record of making a difference is the only way to deliver real and lasting outcomes on social, economic and health disadvantage.
- We are the only party standing with Indigenous communities (along with others including Uniting Care) to oppose to imposing punitive measures like national income management and believe you cannot separate physical, emotional and spiritual health.

### Australian Labor Party

- The Gillard Labor Government has allocated \$1.7 billion to the Northern Territory through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and has made major progress on delivering this commitment.
- Federal Labor has increased annual expenditure on Indigenous specific health programs to almost \$1.2 billion since 2007-08, an increase of 87 per cent.
- The Gillard Labor Government is making income management reforms in the Northern Territory that target support to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, and will consider extending these

reforms to other disadvantaged communities around Australia.

### Christian Democratic Party

- We believe services should be provided to all based upon need and while we note that many in the Indigenous communities have very poor outcomes we will supply community appropriate assistance so that all Australians receive good outcomes in regard to health, housing education and employment.
- We would want to work with local communities enabling their membership to develop community appropriate improvements in these areas and seek to provide all assistance directly to needy families.

### Coalition - Liberal and National Parties

- A Coalition Government will accelerate action to replace the inaction of the Labor Government on Indigenous affairs. We will end Labor's overly bureaucratic processes and deliver the support and infrastructure that Indigenous Australians were promised but failed to receive under Labor.
- The Leader of the Opposition has introduced a private members Bill into Parliament to overturn the Queensland Government's Wild Rivers Act as it impacts on Cape York. The Wild Rivers legislation won't prevent the declaration of new national parks on Cape York but aims to permit ecologically sustainable development by the Indigenous population.

### Family First

- Family First was the first party to have an Indigenous Australian as its Federal Leader (Andrea Mason).
- We take our commitment on Indigenous issues seriously.
- Most recently, Family First has been arguing for a stronger role in restricting illegal alcohol and drug smuggling onto the APY Lands.



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