

Supporting statements for Australian Christian Values Check List

Federal election – August 2010

The following material provides information to support and substantiate the statements in the **2010 Australian Christian Values Checklist** for the federal election.

The responses and material are taken from Party policy statements, public statements, media reports etc. In some cases the voting record of the parties over the past few years has also been considered.

For additional information on Party Policies see the following websites which detail the policies of the parties.

Party Policies

CDP - <http://www.cdp.org.au/federal-policies.html>

Democratic Labor Party - <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=alias>

Family First - <http://familyfirst.org.au/Policies.htm>

Overview: http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/FamilyFirstPartyLongFormDocument_003.pdf

Liberal Party - <http://www.liberal.org.au/Policies.aspx>

The Nationals - <http://www.nationals.org.au/Policy.aspx>

The Nationals 2010 Policy Platform:

<http://www.nationals.org.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=HLuJulq6L0w%3d&tabid=61>

ALP – Platform - <http://www.alp.org.au/australian-labor/our-platform/>

Policies - <http://www.alp.org.au/agenda/>

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

Other issues of concern to Christians

The **Australian Christian Values Checklist** focuses on moral and ethical issues. Naturally, there are a huge number of other issues that Christians could address. In fact, as we live in the world we should apply our Christianity to every aspect of life, and carefully analyse all policies of each party and the personal values of each candidate before voting.

Often the *Australian Christian Values Institute* is asked why the **Australian Christian Values Checklist** doesn't address issues such as poverty, welfare, illegal immigrants, war and so on. They ask "Why aren't we addressing the 'social justice' issues?"

Many groups are already extensively covering these issues, but few talk about the basic moral foundations of society such as family, sex and life issues. In fact, issues such as marriage, sexualisation of children, the effect of pornography are really 'social' issues as they all affect on the very fabric of society.

When a proper analysis is made of the way the various political parties deal with issues such as the treatment of the poor and marginalised – and even illegal immigrants - there really is very little difference between the policies of the major parties. Although there are minor differences, ostensibly all the parties do what they can to help those who cannot help themselves. There are well-established welfare processes in Australia to assist the poor and marginalised that are generally supported by the major parties.

A current example of similarity between the parties is the way the Labor government is now seeking to copy the Liberal policy of off-shore processing of people who arrive illegally by boat - out of necessity, in order to stop the flow of these boat arrivals.

However, as can be seen from the **Australian Christian Values Checklist** there are real differences between the political parties on many important moral and ethical issues that are often overlooked by the media, and even many Christians. The *Australian Christian Values Institute* endeavours to analyse the differences between the political parties - not the similarities.

Information to support the 2010 Federal Australian Christian Values Checklist

1. Prayers to open Parliament each day

Liberals, Nationals, Family First, DLP and CDP all support the opening of parliament with prayers, which includes the Lord's Prayer. The Labor Party mostly supports it but the Greens have tried to have the prayer abolished.

CDP: "Supports the retention of Christian prayers at the outset of each daily parliamentary session."
<http://www.cdp.org.au/federal-policies/religious-freedom-a-christian-heritage.html>

Family First: – support prayer to open parliament – 2007 Family Voice election survey.
See <http://polls.fol.org.au/survey/el/1067/q/19/view;jsessionid=2k8smoce9kbjh>

Liberal/Nationals: "Firmly committed to the opening of Parliament exclusively each day with the Lord's Prayer".
Response to 2007 ACL Survey.

Labor: Have generally rejected moves to abolish prayers. However, in 2008 the Labor Speaker of the House of Representatives, Harry Jenkins, called for a public debate on whether the prayer should remain or be replaced by an "acknowledgement of Australia's traditional Aboriginal owners." Both major party leaders rejected the proposal. See report at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/speaker-wants-to-scrap-lords-prayer/story-e6freuzr-1111117853518>

On Christianity, Julia Gillard says she is an atheist – she used an affirmation (rather than the Bible) at her swearing in as PM, as did the majority of Labor MPs at beginning of the last Parliament.

Greens: The Greens have regularly introduced and supported motions to remove prayers in parliament. They have proposed replacing the prayer with a 'time of reflection'.

See <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/parties-unite-on-lords-prayer/1343885.aspx?order=1&page=1>

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

Prior to the 2007 election the Coalition had planned to teach Australian history that included Christian heritage and several Christians were on the planning group.

After the 2007 election, Labor scrapped that program and pursued the 'national curriculum'. The proposed history component doesn't include our Christian heritage but rather has sections on unions and revolution.

See Curriculum at <http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp>

Draft K-10 history curriculum: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Documents/K10/History%20curriculum.pdf>

Yrs 11- 12 Modern History:

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Documents/SeniorYears/History/Modern%20History.pdf>

Media report with historians criticising the curriculum: <http://www.news.com.au/national/historians-slam-new-national-modern-history-curriculum/story-e6frfkvr-1225870067583>

3. Support guaranteed funding for national school Chaplaincy program

CDP, Family First and the DLP support the current Chaplaincy program.

DLP: "The DLP believes in maintaining and extending the current school chaplain programme."
<http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=queensland>

It was originally introduced by the **Coalition** government and they support it.

Labor has said they will review it. However, there has been talk by some Labor MPs – including Julia Gillard and Stephen Smith - of it being made into a 'secular' program and used to provide 'counsellors' instead of chaplains.
See <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/chaplaincy-program-goes-secular/story-e6frf716-1111115310830>

The Greens do not support the Chaplaincy program. They want 'secular counsellors'.

See <http://www.theage.com.au/national/greens-push-for-counsellors-not-chaplains-20100326-r37m.html>

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

Family First, the DLP and the CDP specifically support marriage as the ideal.

In general, the major parties don't distinguish between marriage and *de facto* relationships. The Greens see all relationships as equal.

Labor has elected Julia Gillard as leader – she is living in a *de facto* relationship and plans to move into the Lodge with Tim Mathieson. See <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/julia-gillard-de-facto-partner-tim-mathieson-will-live-in-the-lodge-if-she-wins-the-election/story-fn59niix-1225897338638>

Greens: of 157 references to 'marriage' on their website, all but 8 refer to 'same-sex 'marriage' and none even consider the support or promotion of marriage.

5. Provide free pre-marriage education for couples

CDP and Family First specifically support free pre-marriage education.

CDP: "School education programs preparing for marriage - Free pre marriage counselling covering practical issues such as budgeting issues etc." Answer to 2007 ACL Survey.

Family First: "Providing relationship and marriage education as well as ongoing opportunities for building and developing skills so that families have optimal chances for success."

See http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/THEFAMILY_000.pdf

DLP: Strong policy on marriage, but no specific mention of pre-marriage education.

See policy on marriage at <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=life-marriage-family>

Liberals/Nationals: No apparent policy - but pre-marriage education has been promoted by Kevin Andrews, and proposed by the 1998 House of Representatives Committee Report on marriage "*To have and to hold*".

6. Family impact statement tabled publicly in Parliament before vote

CDP and Family First have policies proposing a Family Impact Statement on legislation before Parliament – to consider the effect it would have on families. After the 2004 election, Family First had an agreement with the Coalition that Family Impact Statements would be done on proposed legislation.

CDP: "We would test every Government plan, budget, policy or Bill by this basic FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS."

See http://www.cdp.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=10

Family First: Support Family Impact Statements on legislation. See

<http://www.familyfirst.org.au/documents/FAMILYIMPACTSTATEMENTS.pdf>

Labor: Labor established an 'Office of Work and Family' – however, in recent Senate Estimates hearings, Labor acknowledged that their own 'Office of Work and Family' did not provide any input to *Fair Work Australia* in relation to the development of modern awards'.

See report at <http://www.liberal.org.au/Latest-News/2010/05/05/Labor-ignores-Working-Families.aspx>

7. Support parents' choice in education with educational vouchers

CDP, Family First and the DLP specifically support educational vouchers for education – the principle is that parents would all be provided with as assessed amount of funding for their child/student which they could present to the school of their choice.

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."

See <http://www.cdp.org.au/federal-policies/education.html>

Family First: SA and Qld websites says they support educational vouchers:

See <http://www.sa-familyfirst.org.au/Schooling/Schooling.htm>

DLP: "Per capita voucher funding for all schooling to ensure a just distribution of taxes levied and allocated for education, to safeguard the inalienable right of parents to choose, without financial penalty, the kind of education or moral upbringing their children shall receive and to give parents an effective veto over school policy and curriculum decisions that infringe parental standards and values." See <http://203.10.72.20/~delapa/~policies.htm>

and for SA “To do this the DLP supports per capita voucher-based funding for schools and other centres of learning” – see <http://www.dlpforsa.org/policies.html#Education>.

The Nationals and Liberals support parental choice in education but not vouchers:

Nationals: “The Nationals helped to pioneer government funding for independent schools, and we continue to support parents’ right to educate their children at the school of their choice. “

Page 16, Platform <http://www.nationals.org.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=HLuJulq6L0w%3d&tabid=61>

Liberal: Support parental choice: “Unlike Labor, the Liberals support parental school choice because we actually believe in it.” See <http://www.liberal.org.au/Issues/Education.aspx>

Labor: promotes state secular education but acknowledges “The right of families to choose non-government schooling should be supported by public funding that reflects need and is consistent with the creation of a diverse and inclusive society.” See Platform Ch 5. They do not support any form of voucher system.

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

CDP and Family First have specific policies on this – the major parties do not, although the Liberals, whilst in government prior to 2007, supported changes to the court system regarding custody and shared parenting.

Family First: “FAMILY FIRST introduced amendments in 2006 to ensure shared parenting is the norm and will continue to lobby for that outcome” See <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policyssharedparenting.pdf>

9. Preserve marriage - Oppose same-sex marriage

CDP, Family First, the DLP and the Coalition reject same-sex ‘marriage’. Labor has changed its position somewhat... Greens totally support it!

CDP: “MARRIAGE: We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught that in the beginning God created mankind - male and female, and meant husband and wife to live together honourably in a lasting, loving, lifelong, faithful relationship.” See <http://www.cdp.org.au/about.html>

Family First: “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

DLP: “The DLP unequivocally supports legislation that will preserve and protect marriage as the voluntary union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others, in a commitment for life. “
See <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=life-marriage-family>

Nationals: “Removing any discrimination against sexual preference while maintaining the sanctity of marriage between a man and woman.” See Page 62, Platform.

Liberals: Proposed the Marriage Amendment Act in 2004 to ensure that marriage is only between a man and a woman. Tony Abbott recently reiterated the Liberal party’s opposition to same-sex ‘marriage’.
See <http://www.theage.com.au/national/abbott-softens-on-samesex-unions-20100325-qzvy.html>

Labor: The Platform was changed in 2009.

It says “Labor will take action to ensure the development of a nationally consistent framework that provides: The opportunity for all couples who have a mutual commitment to a shared life to have their relationship officially recognised and Equal rights for all couples in federal and state laws.

Labor will review relationship recognition arrangements to ensure national consistency.

These reforms are to be implemented consistently with Labor's commitment to maintaining the definition of marriage as currently set out in the Marriage Act.”

The reference to marriage being between a man and a woman was **removed**. Now it just refers to the Marriage Act. In 2009, the Victorian and Tasmanian branches passed motions to support same-sex ‘marriage’.

When Julia Gillard was asked about same-sex ‘marriage’, she responded saying that Labor Party policy on marriage recognises it is between a man and a woman (that isn’t actually policy!).

When asked about her OWN view, she said "**Look, that is my view, I think that’s where we’re at as a community now, and I think it’s appropriate that for these very sensitive issues that we’re reflecting community views.”**

However, community opinion – and Labor Party numbers – can CHANGE!

Penny Wong and Graham Richardson on Q and A showed how that can happen on Monday July 26.

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

The registration of homosexual relationships – either by relationship registers or civil partnerships etc – is occurring at state level but homosexuals want a national scheme. In their Platform Labor says they support official “recognition” of homosexual relationships (see No 8). The Greens also support this, but the other parties don’t.

CDP: Opposes registration of homosexual relationships.

Family First: Prior to the 2007 election they wrote to us, “Family First opposes relationship registers for same-sex couples, because they undermine marriage.” Correspondence from *Family First*.

DLP: “Absolute opposition to legislative or administrative measures that undermine or degrade marriage by conferring on homosexual, lesbian or transsexual pairings any form of legal recognition of their relationships, *per se*, whether through "civil unions", "relationship registers" or other legal device.”

See <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=life-marriage-family>

Liberals: The Liberals have generally not supported registration of homosexual relationships (except in the ACT).

However, Tony Abbott, in a recent interview on Joy FM, supported civil unions/registration -

See reports at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/abbott-softens-on-samesex-unions-20100325-qzvy.html>

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

CDP: Has consistently opposed any adoption by same-sex couples.

DLP: “Statutory recognition of the principle that no child should be conceived to be borne and reared deliberately deprived of a mother or father as in the cases of single women, lesbians and homosexual couples accessing artificial reproduction technologies including IVF and surrogacy or adoption overseas or within Australia.” See

<http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=life-marriage-family>

Family First: Have lobbied against same-sex adoption.

See <http://sa.familyfirst.org.au/pdfs/Family%20First%20Newsletter%20Issue%204.pdf>

Liberal: Have opposed moves in this direction. Tony Abbott, when questioned on adoption by homosexuals, said he thought children should have a mother and a father. <http://www.liberal.org.au/Latest-News/2010/01/08/Sky-News-interview-with-Ashleigh-Gillon.aspx>

Labor: “Labor will ensure that all couples whether married or de facto do not suffer discrimination” and “Equal rights for all couples in federal and state laws.” The only exception made in their Platform is for marriage.

Greens: Support “access, regardless of sexuality and gender identity, to adoption, fostering, artificial insemination and in vitro fertilisation procedures.” See <http://greens.org.au/node/794>

12. Oppose creation and destruction of embryos for research

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

Voting record in 2006:

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)

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

13. Life is precious - Oppose overseas aid for abortion

CDP, DLP and Family First all oppose abortion – and overseas aid for abortion.

The Liberals and Nationals, whilst in government prior to 2007, consistently refused to allow overseas aid funds to be used for abortion. When Labor made the change, Tony Abbott criticised the move – see <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/11/2512864.htm>

Labor: In March 2009, the AusAID rules were changed by the Labor government to allow overseas aid to be used for abortion. See <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/foreign-aid-ban-on-abortion-scraped/story-e6frg6nf-111119093496>

Greens: support abortion (and this funding). Their policy says they support “ensure all women have access to legal, free and safe pregnancy termination services, including unbiased counselling.” See <http://greens.org.au/node/777>

14. Medicare funding of abortion

CDP, Family First and DLP don't support Medicare funding of abortion.

Family First: Prior to the 2007 election, Family First wrote to us: “Family First would support legislation to end Medicare funding of abortion.” Correspondence from Family First.

Sen Steve Fielding said he didn't support government funding of abortions. See <http://currentaffairs.ninensn.com.au/national/665142/undefined>

Labor and Greens both support Medicare funding for abortion.

The Coalition doesn't have a direct policy – during the last parliament Liberal Sen Guy Barnett introduced a private Senator's Bill to remove Medicare funding for some abortions. This wasn't voted on.

15. Euthanasia

Generally considered a ‘conscience vote’.

CDP: “Palliative care services should be more adequately resourced and euthanasia should continue to be illegal.”
Family First: “FAMILY FIRST opposes euthanasia and believes people with suicidal thoughts do not need lethal help, but life-saving assistance.”
See <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/policy/policyhumanlife.pdf>

DLP: “We also propose a substantial increase in the allocation of funding for palliative care facilities for the terminally ill, and the active promotion of public policy in opposition to the legalisation of euthanasia.”
See <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=life-marriage-family>

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 6 addresses palliative care “Labor believes that every person should have access to quality palliative care. Labor is committed to improving the availability and standards of palliative care throughout Australia.

Greens: In various states Greens MPs have introduced voluntary euthanasia laws. In the federal parliament Bob Brown introduced a bill to allow the NT euthanasia law to be re-instated.

16. Extend States' ban on X Rated pornography to ACT & NT

Currently all states ban the sale and display of X-rated pornographic material. However, the two territories, the NT and the ACT, do not ban the sale of X-rated material. What this means is that X-rated pornographic DVDs and videos are mailed to the states, since the constitution prohibits restraining of trade between the States.

What we need is a consistent national ban so that the policy can be effectively enforced.

CDP, Family First and the DLP all support this policy. Neither the Coalition nor Labor has acted on the issue. The Greens do not support such a move.

17. ISP filter

Access to extreme pornographic material on the internet has prompted calls to have a mandatory filter on the internet at the ISP level. This has been adopted as policy by CDP, Family First and the DLP.

Amidst claims that freedom of information would be affected, and uncertainty about what material would be censored, the Coalition has not generally supported this proposal.

The Greens oppose a filter. See <http://greens.org.au/stopthefilter>

18. Raise & enforce standards of decency in all forms of media

There has been a decline in standards in the media – TV, radio, print and film. The bodies dealing with setting and enforcing standards of decency – the *Australian Media and Communication Authority (ACMA)* and the *Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC)* – have adopted more liberal approaches to censorship over the years and these standards need to be strengthened.

CDP, Family First all want the standards increased and enforced.

The Coalition made some positive changes to the classification guidelines whilst in government.

Labor has no plans to intervene in this area – neither do the Greens.

19. Preserve free speech - Oppose religious & sexuality vilification laws

CDP: Oppose vilification laws.

Family First: Oppose vilification laws.

DLP: Oppose vilification laws.

Liberal/Nationals: The Coalition has consistently opposed vilification laws based on religion and sexuality. At the *National Day of Thanksgiving* service in 2004, Peter Costello said they are “bad law”. NDOT, May 2004. See <http://www.treasurer.gov.au/tsr/content/speeches/2004/007.asp>

Labor: Supports vilification laws – “Labor will act to eliminate all forms of discrimination, vilification or harassment and to harmonise anti-discrimination laws and procedures.” See Platform Ch 7.

Greens: “*The Australian Greens want: legal and social environments free from harassment, abuse, vilification, stigmatisation, discrimination, disadvantage or exploitation on the basis of sexuality or gender identity.*” See Goals (6) at <http://greens.org.au/node/794>

20. Allow religious bodies freedom of choice in whom they employ

As part of anti-discrimination laws at state level, many restrictions have been placed on religious groups and schools. In some cases they have been given exemptions, but these are being removed by governments as in Victoria this past year. One of these issues concerns the area of employment.

With the current Inquiry being held by the Australian Human Rights Commission into whether Australia should have a ‘Freedom of Religion Act’, a proposal for federal anti-discrimination laws is quite possible. Thus we need to be aware of how the parties address the issue of the freedom of religious groups.

CDP, Family First and the DLP all oppose any restrictions on religious freedom. The Coalition also supports these measures.

Labor at state level – especially Victoria – has supported restricting these exemptions and thus restricting free choice in whom religious groups can employ.

Greens do not generally support exemptions for religious groups.

21. Protect freedom - Oppose Charter of Rights & similar legislation

CDP, Family First and the DLP all oppose a Bill or Charter of Rights.

DLP: “Vigilance against proposals for a Bill of Rights where support for the adoption of such proposals would serve to undermine the historical checks, balances and safeguards our Constitution provides for limiting the power of governments over the people.”

See <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=constitutional-and-democratic-rights>

The Liberals and Nationals oppose a Bill or Charter of Rights.

Labor: The Labor government commissioned a national consultation into whether Australia should have a Charter or Bill of Rights.

See Salt Shakers campaign page at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/campaigns/329-fed-bill-of-rights>

The Committee recommended a Charter of Rights plus a range of other legislative processes to check legislation against the Charter or the UN treaties and so on.

The Labor government's response was to say they would not introduce a Charter of Rights – **but would introduce various legal instruments that effectively act in the way a Charter of Rights would.**

These are outlined in 'Australia's Human Rights Framework' – see <http://www.ag.gov.au/humanrightsframework>. **They include education, setting up a parliamentary committee to check every piece of legislation against the obligations outlined in UN treaties, requiring that each new Bill introduced into Parliament is accompanied by a statement of compatibility with our international human rights obligations; combining federal anti-discrimination laws into a single Act and so on.**

Greens: totally support a Charter or Bill of Rights. See <http://greens.org.au/node/779>

22. Oppose all illicit drugs & fund abstinence based rehabilitation

CDP, Family First and the DLP all oppose the decriminalisation of illicit drugs and support the funding of abstinence-based rehabilitation programs.

Coalition: The Coalition under the Howard government fully opposed the decriminalisation of illicit drugs and provided funds to abstinence-based rehabilitation programs.

Labor: Do not support the decriminalisation of illicit drugs. Under the Labor government, funds for a number of abstinence-based rehabilitation programs were cancelled.

Greens: say they "do not support the legalisation of currently illegal drugs". See <http://greens.org.au/node/769> However, they do support injecting rooms and heroin trials. They also promote harm minimisation rather than abstinence.

23. Support greater care of God's environment

Environment policy is a challenging issue, with Christians holding varying views, especially on the controversial issue of 'global warming'/climate change.

We believe Christians need to be good stewards of the environment and use resources wisely. At the same time we are to evaluate all the information on these issues to find out the truth. We are also to utilise technological developments to make society better. Some people promote the use of renewable technology such as solar and wind, whilst others support the use of nuclear power.

At the current time in Australia, much debate has focused on the introduction of an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) as proposed by the Labor government in an attempt to try and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide they say is causing 'global warming'. They also attribute this 'warming' to human activity. Others claim that the warming, if it occurs, may well be caused by natural phenomenon such as solar activity.

We are concerned that an Emissions Trading Scheme (tax) would adversely affect every family in Australia by imposing more taxes and push prices up. The introduction of such new taxes is of particular concern because the scientific evidence to support the notion of human-caused global warming is still being debated.

All people should be concerned about, and care for, the environment in which we live but we need to carefully analyse the issue to discern the truth and investigate what each each political party is proposing.

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Prepared for the *Australian Christian Values Institute* - <http://www.christianvalues.org.au/>
By Salt Shakers – www.saltshakers.org.au

Authorised by W Marsh, 217 Nolan St, Berkeley NSW 2506.