

MEDIA RELEASE

For release: Friday, December 2nd, 2011

22 senior church leaders call on Labor not to change marriage

On the eve of Labor's historic vote on marriage, 20 of Australia's senior church and denominational leaders have urged the Government to protect the definition of marriage in Australian law.

The Joint Statement on the Significance of Marriage and the names of the signatories is below.

Joint Statement on the Significance of Marriage

Marriage is the lifelong commitment and faithful union of one man and one woman. As such, marriage is the natural basis of the family because it secures the relationship between biological parents and their children.

As Christian leaders representing different denominations or churches, we join together and affirm our shared commitment to promote and protect marriage. We honour the unique love between husbands and wives; the vital place of fathers and mothers in the life of children; and the corresponding ideal for all children to know the love and role modelling of a father and mother.

Marriage thus defined is a great good in itself, and it also serves the good of others and society, as it has done for thousands of years. The preservation of the unique meaning of marriage is therefore not a special or limited interest, but serves the common good, particularly the good of children.

We call on Government to:

- protect this definition of marriage in Australian law, and*
- not change the meaning of marriage by adding to it different kinds of relationships.*

Pastor Wayne Alcorn National President AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES	The Most Reverend Peter Jensen Archbishop of the Diocese of Sydney ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
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Tabled by Australian Christian Lobby
4. May 2012 - Melb. public hearing

Committee for Preservation of Marriage

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Media Release

Wednesday 24th August 2011

Institution of Marriage is linked to Children for the Sake of Children

In an extraordinary show of unity, more than 50 Australian national leaders of Christian Churches endorsed a document on the importance of marriage as a legal institution because it promotes and protects the identity of children and their internationally recognised right to know, have access to and be nurtured by both their mother and father.

The leaders note that the law has adapted in many ways to accommodate relationships other than marriage including making provisions for persons in de facto and same-sex relationships to have access to the same services that are available to married couples. However marriage remains different and the legal recognition of marriage is needed for the purpose of securing that relationship and the children's relationship within the family unit to both a mother and a father. Children have a right to the complementary experiences of mothering and fathering as far as possible.

They point out that marriage is found across all cultures and ages. Marriage pre-dates the State and does not require the State for its legitimacy. The pre-eminent reason for the State to be involved is to legally protect children and ensure that parents fulfil their obligation to care for and nurture them. Redefining marriage would seriously undermine it and the family unit.

The endorsed document on why marriage should continue to be recognised as a different relationship was prepared by a group of well qualified persons from the Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian Churches who came together under the auspices of the Australian Christian Lobby and with the support of senior denominational leaders to prepare a resource paper.

In a letter to priests, ministers and pastors, the Church leaders note that revising the definition of marriage has been presented simply as a justice issue of non-inclusion. They say that there has been little in the media about the fact that this would mean revising what marriage means, so that marriage would be about romance only and no longer focussed on establishing a relationship in which children are nurtured by both their mother and father.

The leaders said that there is an urgent need for all those who hold positions of leadership in the Churches to encourage parishioners to write to or speak to their local members of Federal Parliament in order to defend the legal institution of marriage because it protects the interests of children.

For further information contact the following members of the **Committee for the Preservation of Marriage**:

A/Prof Nicholas Tonti-Filippini - John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family –
03 9412 3381/ 0408 990 277

Chris Meney - Life, Marriage and Family Centre, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney –
02 9390 5368 / 0409 459 707

Rev. David Palmer - Presbyterian Church of Victoria - 03 9521 6024 / 0434 009 345

Jim Wallace – Australian Christian Lobby – 02 62590431 / 0408 875 979

The *Revising Marriage?* document is available under the Resources tab at australianmarriage.org.au

A brief Key Points brochure (attached) detailing the main points of the endorsed *Revising Marriage?* document will be circulated to politicians..

The following Church leaders endorsed the document:

Anglican: The Most Rev. Dr Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney; The Rt Rev. Peter Hayward, Bishop of Wollongong, Diocese of Sydney; The Rt Rev. Dr Glenn Davies, Bishop of North Sydney, Diocese of Sydney; The Rt Rev. Ivan Lee, Bishop of Western Sydney, Diocese of Sydney; The Rt Rev. Robert Forsyth, Bishop of South Sydney, Diocese of Sydney; The Ven. Narelle Jarrett, Archdeacon, Diocese of Sydney; The Very Rev. Phillip Jensen, Dean of Sydney, Diocese of Sydney; The Rt Rev. Peter Brain, Bishop of Armidale; The Rt Rev. John Harrower, Bishop of Tasmania; The Rt Rev. Ross Nicholson, Assistant Bishop, Diocese of Tasmania; The Ven. Robert McKay, Archdeacon, Northern Mission Region, Diocese of Tasmania; The Ven. Canon John Tongue, Archdeacon, North-west Mission Region, Diocese of Tasmania; The Venerable Noel Bowditch, Archdeacon, City South Network, Diocese of Tasmania; The Very Rev. Richard Humphrey, Dean of Hobart; The Rt Rev. David Mulready, Bishop, Diocese of North West Australia; The Ven. Andrew Burr, Archdeacon of the Midwest, Diocese of North Western Australia; The Ven. Tim Mildenhall, Archdeacon of the Kimberley, Diocese of North Western Australia.

Catholic: His Eminence, George Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney; His Grace, Archbishop Philip Wilson of Adelaide, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference; His Grace, Archbishop Denis Hart, Archbishop of Melbourne; His Grace, Archbishop Barry Hickey, Archbishop of Perth; His Grace, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn; His Grace, Archbishop John Bathersby, Archbishop of Brisbane; His Lordship, Bishop Anthony Fisher, Bishop of Parramatta; His Lordship, Bishop Tim Costelloe, Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne; His Lordship, Bishop Peter Elliott, Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne; His Lordship, Bishop Terry Brady, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney.

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia: Rev Albert Esselbrugge on behalf of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia.

Lutheran: Rev Dr Mike Semmler, President, Lutheran Church of Australia; Rev Neville Otto, Secretary, Lutheran Church of Australia; Rev Greg Pietsch, President, Lutheran Church of Australia - Victorian District; Rev David Altus, President, Lutheran Church of Australia, South Australia/Northern Territory District; Rev Mark Lieschke, President, Lutheran Church of Australia, New South Wales District; Rev Noel Noack, President, Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District.

Orthodox: His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Paul Saliba, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines; His Grace Bishop Suriel, Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Melbourne; Very Rev Dr Michael Protopopov OAM, Vicar General of the Russian Orthodox Church in Australia; Very Reverend Fr Iskandar Aphrem, Syrian Orthodox Church.

Pentecostal: Pastor Phil Pringle, Founder and President of C3 Church International Pastor Tim Jack, National President, Apostolic Church of Australia; Pastor Wayne Alcorn, National President of the Australian Christian Churches; Pastor Mark Conner, Senior Minister of CityLife Church Melbourne.

Presbyterian: The Rt Rev David Jones, Moderator General, Presbyterian Church of Australia; The Rt Rev Andrew J Bray, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Victoria; Mr Peter Graham OAM, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW; The Rt Rev Charles Kennedy, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Tasmania; The Rt Rev Ian Touzel, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of South Australia; The Rev Sandy McMillan, Moderator Elect, Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW; The Rt Rev Graeme McKay, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Queensland; Rev Dr Rowland S. Ward, Convener, Law & Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.

Salvation Army: Commissioner Raymond A Finger, Territorial Commander of the Southern Territory of the Salvation Army; Commissioner James Condon, Territorial Commander of the Eastern Territory of the Salvation Army.

Seventh Day Adventist Church: Pastor Chester Stanley, National President for the Seventh-day Adventist Church; Pastor Ken Vogel, National General Secretary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Uniting Church: The Rev Dr Max Champion, National Chair of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia.