

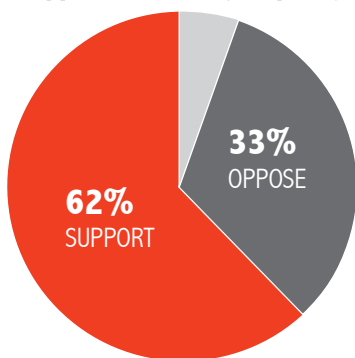


# Marriage equality and public opinion

## Growing public support for marriage equality

Almost two in three Australians believe that same-sex couples should be able to marry, and the percentage is growing all the time.

### Support for marriage equality



Polls on marriage equality began in 2004 when the Marriage Act was amended to preclude the recognition of same-sex marriages.

Except the first poll listed below, all polls asked the same question: Do you agree or disagree same-sex couples should be able to marry?

YEAR	FOR	AGAINST	UNDECIDED
2004	38%	44%	18%
2007	57%	37%	6%
2009	60%	36%	5%
2010	62%	33%	5%

2004: Newspoll commissioned by SBS News  
2007: Galaxy poll commissioned by GetUp!  
2009 & 2010: Galaxy polls commissioned by AME and PFLAG

## Similar polls show similar levels of support

- **Newspoll:** 65% of Australians 'have no problem' with allowing same-sex marriages (November 2010, 148,000 respondents)
- **Westpoll:** 61% support in Western Australia (December 2010)
- **Neilson:** 57% support nationally (November 2010 & March 2011)

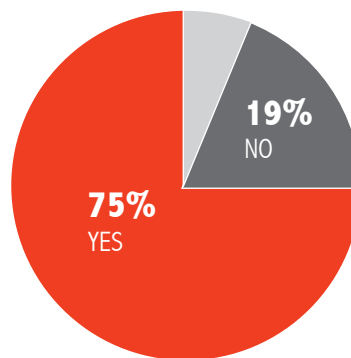
## At a glance

- **62%** of Australians believe same-sex couples should be able to marry
- **75%** of Australians believe reform is inevitable
- **78%** believe there should be a conscience vote on the issue
- **74%** of Labor voters and **48%** of Coalition voters support marriage equality
- **72%** of Australians with young children support marriage equality

## Most believe marriage equality is inevitable

Three out of every four Australians believe it is inevitable that same-sex couples will be allowed to marry.

### Is marriage equality inevitable?



According to a national poll conducted by Galaxy Research in May 2011, 75% believe reform is inevitable and only 19% believe it is not. 6% are undecided.

This suggests that a large proportion of people who oppose marriage equality believe that change to the law is inevitable.

The following believe that marriage equality is inevitable in Australia:

- **80%** of women
- **79%** of people under 50
- **78%** of people with young children

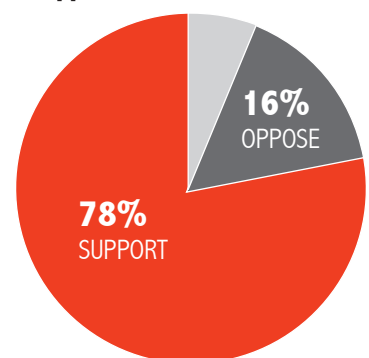
## A matter of conscience: support for a free vote

**78%** of Australians support a conscience vote on marriage equality. This support is uniformly high with a free vote being supported by:

- **80%** of Labor voters, **75%** of Coalition voters and **88%** of Green voters
- **78%** of over 50s and **84%** of under 24s
- **76%** of men and **79%** of women
- **75%** of blue-collar workers and **80%** of white-collar workers

Whatever their views on marriage equality, Australians overwhelmingly want their elected representatives to vote according to their conscience on this issue.

### Support for a conscience vote





### Where is support the highest and lowest?

Support for marriage equality is:

- **72%** among people with young children
- **80%** among young people under 24
- **81%** among Green voters **BUT**
- Only **46%** among people over 50\*

\*This is the only demographic in which support for marriage equality is not higher than opposition. That age group is split 46%/46%.

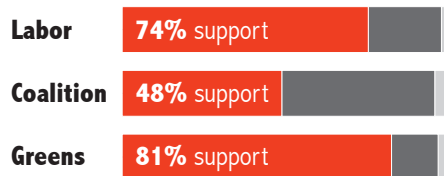
### An even spread of support for marriage equality

It is often assumed there is much lower support for marriage equality among men, blue collar workers, country-dwellers and Coalition voters. But the statistics tell a different story.

- **59% of rural and regional dwellers** support marriage equality, only 5 points less than those in capital cities
- **57% of men** support marriage equality, only 10 points lower than women
- **57% of blue-collar workers** support equality, only 9 points lower than white-collar workers
- **48% of Coalition voters** support equality, which is more than the percentage opposed.

### Labor most out of step with its supporters

- The **Greens** are the only party whose policy matches the views of a majority of its voters.
- The **Coalition's** opposition to marriage equality is out of step with a majority of its voters.
- But the greatest disparity is between **Labor's** opposition to marriage equality and the fact that **74%** of Labor voters support reform.



### Comparisons to public opinion in other countries

In the past, support for marriage equality has been lower in comparable nations where same-sex couples can marry. For example:

- In 2003, when same-sex marriages were first allowed in Canada, only **48%** of Canadians supported the reform.
- In 2011, when five US states allow same-sex marriages, only about **53%** of Americans support the reform.

Australians are not alone in their strong support for marriage equality. :

- In 2010, a national poll in the United Kingdom found **61%** support for allowing same-sex marriages
- In 2011, a national poll in Ireland found **67%** support