



# Marriage equality and the Coalition

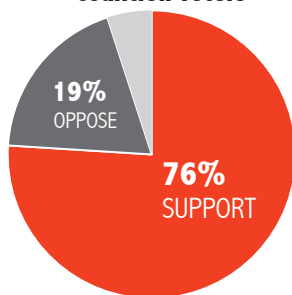
Why a conscience vote will keep the Coalition relevant to mainstream Australia

## Coalition voters support marriage equality

A Galaxy poll conducted in November 2011 found that **4 in 5 Australians** - 80% - want the Coalition to have a conscience vote on allowing same-sex couples to marry.

This includes **76% of Coalition voters** and almost 90% of young voters.

### Support for a conscience vote among Coalition voters



This was confirmed in May 2012 by another Galaxy poll which found **77% support** among Coalition voters.

On top of this, Galaxy has found 73% of voters believe the Coalition's stance should be determined by its tradition of allowing conscience votes, and not by Tony Abbott's personal opposition to reform.

“ I don't think the issue of gay marriage could be described as a radical, left-wing agenda. It's very relevant to many Australians.”

**Heather Ridout**  
Australian Industry Group

Polls also show **a majority** of Coalition voters - 50% - support same-sex marriage, with 44% against.

The Coalition's blanket opposition to marriage equality no longer represents those who vote for it.

The overwhelming majority of Australians want the Coalition to adopt a conscience vote so it can **better represent** the diversity of views among its supporters and within its own ranks.

## Why conservatives support marriage equality

- Marriage promotes **stability and responsibility** in relationships;
- Marriage strengthens family bonds and gives **children** a greater sense of security;
- Marriage promotes **mutual support** between partners and their family members so they are less likely to rely on **the state** at times of crisis in their lives;
- Marriage equality is about **personal freedom** within the bounds of social responsibility;
- Marriage equality promotes **religious freedom** by allowing churches that affirm same-sex couples to legally marry them;
- Marriage equality has an economic dividend of over **\$161 million** through the wedding spend of same-sex couples.

## Coalition figures who support a conscience vote

- **Barnaby Joyce**, federal deputy leader, National Party
- **Malcolm Turnbull**, former federal Coalition leader
- **Barry O'Farrell**, NSW Premier
- **Isobel Redmond**, SA Coalition leader
- **Russell Broadbent**, federal Liberal MP
- **Simon Birmingham**, federal Liberal MP

“ My personal views on [gay marriage] are I am for it.”  
**Campbell Newman**  
Liberal Premier of Queensland

“ We should insist on gay marriage. We should regard it as scandalous that two people could claim to love each other and not want to sanctify their love with marriage and fidelity. It's going to be up to conservatives to make the important, moral case for marriage, including gay marriage.”

**David Brooks**  
Conservative US commentator

“ I think freedom means freedom for everybody. And you ought to have the right to make whatever choice you want to make with respect to your own personal situation. I certainly don't have a problem with it.”

**Dick Cheney**  
former US Republican Vice President

“ I have always been in favour of marriage equality. For those in the Liberal Party it's always been a conscience vote it.”

**Isobel Redmond**  
South Australian Liberal Leader

“ Marriage is a private form of social welfare. Spouses insure each other against sudden loss of income. Married couples are less vulnerable to financial stress than single people. The benefits of marriage on mental health and wellbeing, income and happiness are widely acknowledged... Extending the marital franchise to gay and lesbian couples would multiply the number of Australians who can join this crucial social institution, spreading the positive impact of marriage on society.”

**Chris Berg**, Research fellow,  
Australian Institute of Public Affairs