

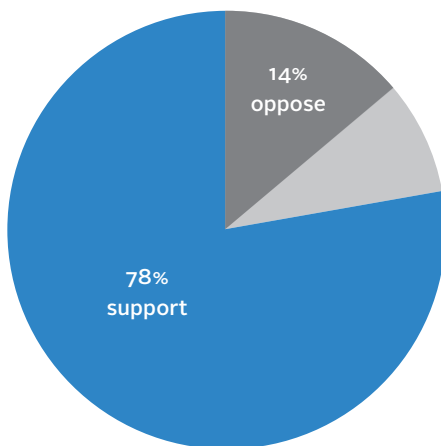


Coalition support for marriage equality

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2014 Crosby Textor research found that around 4 in 5 Australians - 77% - want the Coalition to have a free vote on allowing same-sex couples to marry. This includes 78% of Coalition voters.

Support for a free vote among Coalition voters



"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, Fmr head of the Australian Industry Group

Research (Crosby Textor 2014) also shows a majority of Coalition voters - 58% - support same-sex marriage, with 35% 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 The Coalition's blanket opposition to marriage equality no longer represents those who vote for it.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 free 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.

"It's true that the course of true love doesn't run smooth but I think we are gradually getting to the point where Australians are embracing the opportunity for all of us, regardless of our differences, to enjoy one thing, the wonderful institution of marriage, which I believe will be strengthened when Australia agrees to same-sex marriage."

Will Hodgman, Tasmanian Liberal Premier

"My life won't change if people of the same sex marry. The Earth is not going to shake or change for me. But I know it will for those Australians who want to marry their partner but are prohibited from doing so in this country. Yes, they can marry in other countries, but they should be able to marry in the country of their birth, among family and friends,"

Jeff Kennett, Fmr Victorian Liberal Premier

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

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