



16 September 2017

## TONIGHT A TEST FOR THE EXTREMISTS OF THE 'YES' CAMPAIGN

**"The second big risk for the 'yes' campaign is the behaviour of some of its own supporters."**

In today's edition of the *Brisbane Times*, Peter Hartcher details comments by leaders within the 'yes' campaign who say that the key risk to their success is the tactics employed by their own supporters, and the campaign's inability to control them.

Hartcher quotes a strategist within the 'yes' campaign as saying that tonight's national launch for the Coalition for Marriage at the International Convention Centre in Sydney posed a test for the 'yes' camp's leaders. The strategist said that a protest at tonight's Coalition for Marriage event would demonstrate that the same-sex marriage lobby had been "hijacked by extremists."

**"Any protest is a bad protest when you are trying not to scare middle Australia," the strategist was quoted as saying.**

The admission that the 'yes' campaign could not control the behaviour of its supporters was telling, the Coalition for Marriage said today.

"The bullying and intimidation tactics of its base – too frequently occurring and conducted by too numerous a 'yes' campaigner to be labelled as "fringe" – has the risk of revealing the true intent of many 'yes' campaigners before Australians cast their ballots, said Coalition for Marriage spokeswoman, Sophie York.

"The Australian people are concerned. They are concerned about their parental rights as radical gay sex and gender education classes become more widespread and compulsory. They are concerned about what will happen to their freedom to speak out against same-sex marriage without being targeted by anti-discrimination laws.

"Instead of addressing these concerns, the 'yes' campaigners are adding to them with loud, violent protests, so that Australians are now concerned even about their ability to gather together with other like-minded people and discuss the consequences of changing the *Marriage Act*."

"If those within the campaign cannot control their supporters now, why should the Australian people believe promises that they will be able to control this type of activism if the law is changed?"

Despite this, Coalition for Marriage supporters would gather in good numbers this evening for the official launch.

"Tonight, thousands of Australians will defy the bullies and unite to tell others it's ok to say 'no'," Ms York concluded.

"The event is a test for the 'yes' campaign and its supporters. Will they allow people to gather, to listen, to express their views on matters of free speech, freedom of religious and the rights of parents?"

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“Or will they prove that they have in fact lost control and that their campaign is run by extremists who will do anything to silence those who do not agree with them?” Ms York concluded.

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