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ETHNIC LEADERS EXPRESS CONCERN FOR CONSEQUENCES OF REDEFINING MARRIAGE

Leaders of many of Australia's ethnic groups came together last night in Sydney to discuss the consequences of redefining marriage and the impact of voting in the same-sex marriage postal survey.

Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja, addressed the crowded room at St Mary and St Mina Coptic Orthodox Church in Bexley encouraging them to talk to their communities about the importance of having their say.

"From my perspective it has impacts on religious freedom, it has impacts on people's freedom to speak, it has impacts what is taught in schools and parents' ability to influence, or choose, what their children are taught," Senator Seselja told those gathered.

Senator Seselja spoke to those in attendance about the importance of having conversations in communities because the vote is about all the Australian people.

He also responded to questions from those gathered, many of whom expressed concerns about how the change would impact the ability of parents in ethnic communities to raise their children in accordance with their own, cultural values.

"We keep hearing from those in ethnic communities that traditional family values are important to them," Coalition for Marriage spokeswoman Monica Doumit said.

"They particularly tell us that they are concerned about how a 'yes' vote will impact what their kids are taught in the classroom.

"In many ethnic cultures, the views and values held by parents still hold significant influence over their children. What these parents are hearing from their friends and relatives in countries that have legalised same-sex marriage is that this influence and authority is being undermined in schools.

"Already in schools in Australia, we are hearing reports that students are told to not tell their parents what they are learning in some of these sex and gender programs.

"Australians of ethnic origin have a right to be concerned, and should speak to their communities about the consequences for education if a 'yes' vote was to prevail," she concluded.

ENDS

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