



9 October 2017

## 10,000+ AT MARRIAGE RALLY IN WESTERN SYDNEY HEARTLAND

More than ten thousand people streamed in to Fairfield Showground yesterday for a Family Festival organised by the Eastern Churches of Australia and backed by the Coalition for Marriage. The large gathering demonstrated the strong support for a 'no' vote amongst Australians of ethnic heritage.

The festival included rides, food stalls, music and dancing, as well as powerful addresses delivered by the Honourable Michael Sukkar MP, Member for Deakin and Assistant Minister to the Treasurer, Sophie York, Coalition for Marriage spokeswoman, His Excellency Robert Rabbat, Melkite Bishop of Australia, Dr Pansy Lai from Australian Chinese for Families, and Susan Hourani from Radio 2Moro.

Dr Lai, who co-ordinated a petition of more than 17,000 Australian-Chinese parents against Safe Schools in NSW, which was then followed by similar petitions from the Australian-Indian and Australian-Lebanese communities addressed the crowd about the link between a change in the marriage law, the introduction of radical LGBTIQ sex and gender programs into the classrooms, and the removal of parental rights.

"We parents have a say in what our kids get taught about life, relationships, sex and marriage. We parents are the ones who must speak up to protect our children because nobody is going to do it for us," Dr Lai said.

Following on from Dr Lai's call to protect the family, Mr Sukkar commented on the cultural importance of the link between mother and child. "I've learned you don't come between a Lebanese mother and her kids," he said to rapturous applause. Mr Sukkar reminded the crowd that it was not only okay, but their duty, to say 'no.'

Coalition for Marriage spokeswoman Sophie York called the gathering 'energising.'

"It shows that there is still so much energy and so much resolve in the 'no' camp. The people I met today are committed to working tirelessly to ensure that as many 'no' votes as possible are posted over the coming weeks.

"Too often in this debate, the diverse voices of Australia's migrant communities have been ignored. These people are the silent majority, but we heard them loud and clear in Fairfield yesterday. In different dialects, they had the same message: we are voting 'no'," Ms York concluded.

*Present at the gathering from the different faith communities was His Excellency Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia, His Grace Anba Daniel, Coptic Orthodox Bishop of Australia, His Excellency Robert Rabbat, Melkite Bishop of Australia, His Excellency Malatius Malki Malki, Syriac Orthodox Bishop of Australia and NZ, His Excellency Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan Bishop of the Archdiocese of Australia, NZ and Lebanon for the Assyrian Church of the East, His Excellency Mar Yacoub Daniel, Archbishop of the Ancient Church of the East, His Excellency Haykazoun Najarian, Armenian Orthodox Bishop of Australia and NZ, His Excellency Basilio Kodseie, Metropolitan Antiochian Orthodox Bishop-Elect of Australia, Father Paul Mingana, representing Archbishop Mar Amil Nonna, Chaldean Bishop of Australia, Monsignor Basil Susanya, Armenian Catholic Church, and Monsignor Marcellino, Vicar General of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia.*

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