



13 November 2017

### **PATTERSON BILL A 'SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT'**

The Coalition for Marriage today welcomed the private members' bill proposed by Senator James Patterson as an important intervention in the protection of the freedoms of all Australians in advance of the result of the same-sex marriage postal survey being known on Wednesday.

"We know that the Dean Smith bill is woefully inadequate in protecting the freedoms of Australians who are not professional clergy," Coalition for Marriage spokesman, Lyle Shelton said today.

"While the Patterson bill needs to be considered carefully to ensure that it provides sufficient protections for freedom of speech and belief, it is a significant improvement on what we have seen previously."

Along with Senator Smith, Senator Patterson sat on the on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill earlier this year, and heard from hundreds of Australians concerned about the impact that a change in the definition of marriage would have on their freedoms.

"The bill demonstrates what can be achieved when issues of freedom of speech and freedom of belief are carefully considered and not dismissed as unnecessary, unimportant or – as we have heard frequently from the 'yes' campaign throughout this debate – a 'red herring.'

"As Senator Patterson said today, religious freedoms extend to the congregations and don't end at the church, mosque or synagogue door, and his bill recognises that.

"We trust that, in the event of a 'yes' vote, the Patterson bill and the freedoms it seeks to protect will be carefully considered by Parliament, and that any law that does not address those freedoms will not be supported" Mr Shelton concluded.

ENDS

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