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FREEDOMS TEST FOR PARLIAMENT

This week's House of Representatives debate on same-sex marriage will be a test of Parliament's ability to uphold basic freedoms such as speech, conscience and religion.

"Australians did vote for same-sex marriage but they did not vote to see their fellow Australians who disagreed dragged before tribunals and courts," Coalition for Marriage spokesman Lyle Shelton said.

"But that is a very real possibility under the Green/Labor Dean Smith Bill which passed the Senate last week."

Mr Shelton said No voters accepted the result, and that same-sex marriage would be legislated this week.

But he said it was reasonable for No and Yes voters to expect that legalising same-sex marriage would not take away the freedom to believe and act upon the traditional belief about marriage.

"Unless the Parliament accepts amendments to protect freedom of speech and belief, it is likely that more Australians will end up in front of tribunals in the way Hobart Archbishop Julian Porteous did, at the urging of arguably Australia's most prominent same-sex marriage activist Rodney Croome.

"It is likely that more people will be sacked from their jobs, as occurred to a young Canberra No voter, and that more people will be pressured by diversity officers at work to get off the boards of Christian charities, as happened to Mark Allaby."

Mr Shelton said a pro-family charity in New Zealand, Family First, was having its charitable status challenged by the NZ Charities Commission because its views on marriage were no longer in line with "New Zealand values".

"Every day of the marriage plebiscite campaign, Yes Campaigners said our concerns about freedom of speech and belief were 'red herrings' and 'furphies'.

"If those assertions were made in good faith then the Parliament should have no problem supporting amendments to protect them."

Mr Shelton said he hoped Labor MPs, particularly those in the No voting western Sydney electorates would be free to vote for freedom protecting amendments.

"It was disappointing to see Labor Senators whipped into voting for the Dean Smith Bill last week. I wonder what western Sydney No voters will think if Labor MPs fail to support freedom amendments," Mr Shelton said.

ENDS

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