



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## Bishops Commission for Family, Youth and Life

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP (Chairman)  
Bishop Peter Comensoli  
Bishop Mark Edwards OMI  
Bishop Michael Kennedy

5 September 2017

Your Graces, My Lords and Reverend Monsignors,

### **Weekly Communiqué to assist information-sharing for the Marriage Postal Survey**

There have been some interesting developments in the debate surrounding the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey in the last week. This communiqué will cover some of the most important developments.

#### **High Court Challenge**

The High Court Challenge to the Postal Survey has begun hearing arguments today. There has been a lot of commentary as to whether the challenge will be successful and speculation about what the Government will do if the High Court decides that the postal survey is unconstitutional.

Until a verdict is reached it is important that we continue to advocate the Catholic teaching on marriage and what the consequences will be if marriage is redefined.

#### **Reaction to Recent Coalition for Marriage Television Advertisement**

The Coalition for Marriage began running a television [advertisement](#) on Tuesday last week. A number of media outlets dismissed the claims made in the advertisement. The Coalition for Marriage has responded to this criticism by providing [clear evidence](#) to back up the claims made in the advertisement.

The three women featured in the advertisement have been subject to considerable abuse:

- Celia White's assertion about uniforms has been denied by the Principal of the school concerned despite the existence of a Departmental complaint on the matter.
- An online petition with 5000 signatures is seeking to deregister Dr Pansy Lai's medical license. Yesterday, GetUp! withdrew its endorsement of the petition.
- The family of Heidi McIvor has been vilified on social media and their church threatened with violence by LGBT activists.

#### **Fathers' Day Television Advertisement prevented from airing**

A Fathers' Day television [advertisement](#) produced by the group Dads4Kids, which has run for 15 years as a community service announcement, was deemed to be 'political advertising' by Free TV Australia and could not run on television over the weekend without a political authorization. This decision has been widely criticised in the media as politicising Father's Day.

#### **Video messages featuring Bishops on the issue of marriage**

Some video messages have been produced on the issue of Marriage and the Postal Survey. The links to these messages are provided below:

- [Love for Real Marriage - Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP](#)
- [Archbishop Julian Porteous speaks on Marriage Law Postal Survey](#)

If you have produced a video message on the plebiscite and would like for it to be shared please forward a copy to Ben Smith so we can send it out in future updates.

### **Pastoral Letters from Archbishops and Bishops**

A copy of some recently received pastoral letters are attached to the email accompanying this letter from:

- [Archbishop Philip Wilson](#)
- Bishop Peter Ingham
- Bishop Gerard Holohan
- Bishop Michael Morrissey

If you have issued a pastoral message on the plebiscite and would like for it to be shared please forward a copy to Ben Smith so we can send it out in future updates. All of these messages will be uploaded to the ACBC website for easy access and reference.

### **Coalition for Marriage brochures being translated into 40 different languages**

The Coalition for Marriage are translating some of their material into 40 different languages. If you are aware of key people who are “influencers” in their migrant communities, please encourage them to contact [communications@coalitionformarriage.com.au](mailto:communications@coalitionformarriage.com.au) so they can get access to the relevant material for their communities.

### **Month of Prayer and Fasting for Marriage and Families – October 2017**

On August 28 you would have received a letter from Bishop Michael Kennedy, regarding the Month of Prayer and Fasting for Marriage and Families - to be held across Australia in October 2017. The letter highlights the rationale behind the initiative and provides some link to resource for parishes.

The Australian Christian Churches recently wrote to their 1,100 churches calling for a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Tuesday 12th September.

### **Coalition for Marriage – Call for Volunteers**

More than 3000 people have volunteered to assist in the campaign from right across Australia. The Coalition for Marriage are currently conducting training sessions for volunteers for the campaign. I would urge you to encourage parishes to promote the call for volunteers by directing people to register at [www.coalitionformarriage.com.au/volunteer](http://www.coalitionformarriage.com.au/volunteer).

### **Resources**

A web page on the ACBC web site has been established to provide some information on the Postal Survey: [www.catholic.org.au/plebiscite](http://www.catholic.org.au/plebiscite). There are also a number of marriage resources at [www.sydneycatholic.org/marriageinfo/](http://www.sydneycatholic.org/marriageinfo/). Further resources are currently being developed and will be available for distribution soon.

I hope you find this information of assistance for your ministry. If you have any feedback please contact Ben Smith on [ben.smith@catholic.org.au](mailto:ben.smith@catholic.org.au).

Yours fraternally in Christ

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