

A Yes Era?

While the Yes campaign has succeeded, it is a pyrrhic victory. Given that it was pretty well compulsory to vote Yes in business, the arts, cultural and sporting arenas, public education and service, and the media, the numbers garnered do not do justice to the amount of money that was spent or the influence that was exerted. The Yes leaders must be personally wondering why they could not have done better, and especially why they could not have garnered the incredible and extensive commitment of the volunteers on the No side. Perhaps this was partly complacency; they thought they would win?

Of course, most secular people were not intimately involved in the whole plebiscite debate, and this is consistent with the electorate survey from four years ago that found only a handful of electorates were concerned with the idea of revising marriage.

The vote does raise a question of Why did many secular Australians vote Yes?

While there could be many reasons, some thoughts are below:

- People who simply wanted an end to this part of the debate and thought that voting Yes would at least take the never-ending push for change off the agenda.
- People who genuinely believe that a Yes vote was a simple acknowledgement and affirmation of same-sex couples who wanted to marry each other; a nod to fairness as they perceived it. This is well illustrated by the Yes advertisement that showed equal amounts of orange juice being poured into glasses. If drinks are being distributed within a group, the idea is that all should receive the same. Reducing marriage to a commodity helped some Australians to think it was unfair not to allow all people the same rights. We are now all fundamentally



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commercially driven creatures and like to have equal commercial outcomes. Many of these Yes voters would not have considered other issues.

- People who saw a commercial advantage for their own company or business (this was often promoted), or were too afraid to not vote Yes because of financial disincentives.
- People who had come to the point of view that Australia was being left out in terms of change in western English speaking countries, and thought it was damaging our international standing and practical relationships in terms of recognition of marriages of other Western English speaking countries.
- People who know that there is more to come in terms of an agenda, but believe future changes are an acceptable price to pay for marriage revision now.

- And People who are deeply and ideologically committed to further change and they have already constructed the list with a view to ultimately revising all accepted moral practices that have an underlying Judeo-Christian ethic.

The difficult aspect for Australia in all this is that the ideologically committed are usually the ones that eventually take over, removing the more moderate influences who finally realise they cannot come on board with the full agenda.

Whatever happens in the future, the Church has always had difficult times and times when the practice and beliefs of the society around it have been very different. Indeed, the Church itself has eras of apostasy, but God is always faithful and there is reform and renewal. We do not know the time, but continue to pray and trust in God, and not in the politics of the day or the changing fashions of belief.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13: 8)

Peter Bentley