



Rodney Croome
Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group
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Dear Mr Croome,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to outline the views of the Coalition on the important issues facing your members. On behalf of the Coalition Members of Parliament and candidates I am pleased to respond to your survey in the following attachment.

The Coalition believes Labor has made the future of all Australians more uncertain.

On top of their billion-dollar waste on school buildings, their mismanaged home insulation fiasco and their soft border protection policies, Labor is growing Australia's debt by \$100 million per day.

They even removed an elected Prime Minister to suit their own political interest.

The Coalition is taking a stand in the best interest of Australia's future.

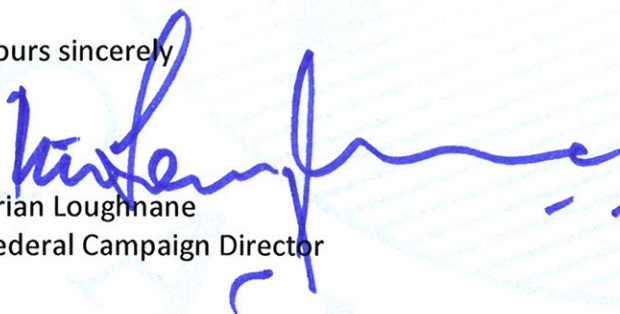
We will end the waste, repay the debt, stop the taxes, stop the boats and ease the pressure on Australian families.

Throughout the election campaign we will be progressively announcing policies outlining our commitments for Australia's future. These policies will cover a number of issues canvassed in your survey.

Once announced, our policies will be available at www.liberal.org.au and www.nationals.org.au.

Thank you for helping us to communicate the Coalition's commitments to your members.

Yours sincerely



Brian Loughmane
Federal Campaign Director

Coalition response to the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group

The Coalition commends your organisation's dedication to the well-being of your members and your active promotion of issues that affect your members in the Australian community.

Anti-discrimination and anti-vilification legislation

The Coalition condemns all forms of discrimination. We have no plans to conduct formal inquiries into Commonwealth or State anti-discrimination legislation, but recognise that amendments to Commonwealth legislation may be necessary in respect of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

We believe Australians are a welcoming and tolerant group of people.

All States and Territories of Australia prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in a range of areas of public life, including education and employment. The majority of states and territories also prohibit harassment on grounds of sexual orientation. We support these existing statutes.

Prevention of and punishment for violent crime are generally matters for State governments and parliaments.

Marriage Equality

The Coalition Government acted in 2004 to define in legislation that marriage is 'the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life'. We do not support an amendment to the Marriage Act to allow same sex couples to marry.

The Coalition believes that this definition reflects the views of the majority of the Australian community.

The Australian Government does not regulate civil unions and relationship registers. The regulation of same sex relationships is a matter for the States and Territories. In that context, the Coalition has no plans to introduce civil unions or relationship registers for same-sex couples.

Education

The Coalition is opposed to all forms of bullying. We are determined to ensure that every school has protocols in place that all teachers and parents are aware of and can follow to that deter bullying in schools.

When last in government, the Coalition rolled out a package of support measures under the National Safe Schools Framework to help schools maintain a safe environment for their students. In 2005 we built on this programme with further funding for a National Safe

Schools Week. We continue to support pragmatic and constructive measures to prevent bullying.

A Coalition Government will also make the National School Chaplaincy Programme an ongoing programme and will continue funding at its present levels – \$165 million over 3 years.

The National School Chaplaincy Programme was introduced by the former Coalition Government and enabled schools to employ a part-time school chaplain, with the purpose of providing pastoral care and non-denominational spiritual guidance in schools.

The chaplaincy programme has been particularly successful in helping students with behaviour management issues and those that may have difficulties in their social relationships. The programme also helps students that battle with loneliness or bullying at schools and students who have difficulties in their families.

Health

The Coalition supports health plans and policies that improve the health system for all Australians. We strongly support a public health system that treats and effectively supports Australians regardless of their economic or social status or their sexuality.

We do not plan to create new national health plans that are tailored to help specific groups. Such plans could divert the government's limited resources away from the essential task of maintaining an adequately resourced and efficient health system for all.

The Coalition wants to take a proactive approach to health and fitness.

The Coalition is concerned about the prevalence of HIV infection. In government the Coalition spent millions of dollars, especially in Victoria, to fight the spread of HIV and raise awareness about it among Australians. We oversaw about \$3 million a year for a national HIV/AIDS education, health promotion and policy programme.

Violence

Law and order, in particular violent crime, is the responsibility of State and Territory governments and their law enforcement agencies. We support all their efforts to reduce the incidence of violent crime. We would facilitate discussion and implementation of any related national projects they wished to pursue through the COAG process.

Because the Labor government has left the budget in a parlous state, the Coalition cannot commit to new programmes over and above those we have already announced.

Suicide

The Coalition acknowledges the depressing incidence of suicide in the Australian community. We are committed to programmes that reduce the likelihood of suicide. In particular, the Coalition's *Real Action Plan for Better Mental Health* recognises younger Australians bear the brunt of mental illness. Many of these young people end up on the streets. Evidence shows that with early and targeted intervention treatment, many are able to overcome their problems, return to health and lead socially and economically productive lives.

This measure provides \$1.5 billion towards 20 new Early Psychosis Intervention Centres, 60 additional youth *headspace* sites and 800 acute and sub-acute early intervention beds. It builds on the Coalition's 2006 investment of \$1.9 billion for services for people with a mental illness, their families and carers. That investment was the biggest investment into mental health of any government in Australian history.

We are also strongly committed to combating illicit drug use, including the trafficking and distribution of drugs and the provision of treatment services to help people get off drugs. In Government we will give unequivocal support for the fight against the use of illicit drugs and recently announced an additional \$93.1m to increase customs inspections of air and sea ports to crack down on drug importation.

Foreign Affairs

The Coalition supports Australia's status as a signatory of the United Nations Declaration on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. We condemn human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity wherever they occur

Transgender issues

The Coalition will give serious consideration to the recommendations of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report *Same-Sex: Same Entitlements*. The report will inform any changes made to the relevant government programs. Such consideration will be in keeping with the Coalition's history of removing legislative discrimination against homosexual people.

The Commonwealth will always work with State governments to implement sensible programmes and reforms that improve the lives of their citizens.

Commonwealth Government funding and consultation

The Coalition is happy to seek and receive advice from all genuine community organisations throughout our policy development processes.