

## Making an Oral Submission to the Select Committee

### What will happen when I appear before the Select Committee?

You will be called by name to the table and welcomed by the Chair who may or may not introduce herself/ himself and the other Members of the Committee. The Chair will then invite you to speak to your submission. Frequently the Chair will begin by saying words along the lines of “we have your submission and have read it”, but on other occasions you may simply be asked to speak to your submission. There are no hard and fast rules.

The Select Committee which is dealing with the Marriage Amendment bill (Government Administration committee) has six MPs. The members are Chris Auchinvole, Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi and Eric Roy from the National Party, Ruth Dyson (Chairperson) and Trevor Mallard from the Labour Party, and Holly Walker from the Green Party. (On some days they are replaced by their colleagues).

Only Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi and Eric Roy voted against the Bill on the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading.

### The “Do’s”

- Arrive early if you can, so that you can see other submissions, and how the process works.
- Begin your time with the words “Thank you Madam/Mr Chair for the opportunity to speak to my/our Submission”
- Restrict your remarks to the time you have and leave time for questions. If you are given 5 minutes - which is likely to be all the time you will have – use 2-3 minutes of that to make your main points and leave 2 minutes to answer questions. At a normal speaking speed – and you don’t want to gabble - you will have time for only about 100 words.
- Think carefully about what you want to say and write it out in full. Highlight your most important points
- If at all possible, include a personal experience or personal conviction as to why marriage is so important to you as it is currently defined, and what effect it would have if it was changed. Your personal opinion carries weight.
- Rehearse with someone and ask them to time you. If it’s beyond 3 minutes think carefully about what you can leave out. If you are comfortably inside that time is there something you want to add? If so add that material and repeat the rehearsal.
- Speak clearly and ask the person you are rehearsing with for feedback in that regard. Do they understand what you are saying?
- Be passionate about what you are saying. Follow your heart. Sincerity always works well.
- Be gracious, ‘speaking the truth in love’ as you would to someone you wanted to influence.
- Be respectful.

### The “Don’ts”

- Don’t feel intimidated. You are speaking to **your** House of Representatives and the Members of the Select Committee are there to serve your nation and its people. You have every right to be there as a citizen and a voter.
- Don’t get angry. Gentle words spoken with sincerity are better. Try to persuade.
- Don’t attempt to answer a question if you don’t know the answer. Better to repeat what you have already said, and if the questioner is persistent, just say you have no more to add.
- Don’t read from your submission. Refer from your notes but endeavour to make at least some eye contact with the Committee.
- Don’t quote chapter or verse from the Bible. Instead think of a way to express any biblical principles you may want to refer to in your own words, as you would in a secular environment.