

Statement by the Board of Darwin's 97 Seven FM about the marriage reform debate.

1 Statement on the Marriage Reform Debate

1. *As a Christian organisation, **Darwin Christian Broadcasters Association Inc. trading as Darwin's 97 Seven** defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.*
2. *We acknowledge the plurality of views and beliefs about the definition of marriage. We respect those with different beliefs to our own, and uphold their right to speak and act in accordance with those beliefs.*
3. *In line with the universal human right of freedom of religious expression, and as a broadcaster licensed to serve the Christian community, we regard our particular role as being to inform listeners (about this and other issues) from a Christian perspective, having regard to the intersection between theology, historical church practice and culture.*
4. *Accordingly our coverage*
 - a. *will engage in and promote discussion that is informative, fair, educative, and not inflammatory;*
 - b. *will be respectful of all persons and not promote hate speech, ridicule or other forms of vilification;*
 - c. *will encourage Christians to take part in community discussions in a like manner, and to vote in accordance with their conscience.*
5. *In providing content on this issue our aim is to be informative rather than coercive. While our statement of faith regarding marriage is clear, our role as a broadcaster is to inform rather than advocate.*
6. *In this regard we will*
 - a. *not taking advertising of a political nature in relation to the Plebiscite,*
 - b. *clearly state relevant affiliations of interview guests,*
 - c. *ensure commentary is clearly identified as such, and*
 - d. *seek to cover Christian perspectives on the marriage issue in a fair and balanced way.*

2 Background to the statement

Darwin's 97 Seven is a Christian NFP community broadcaster and media organisation.

Darwin's 97 Seven is licensed specifically to provide specialised programming for and by the Christian community of interest in the Greater Darwin Area.

Darwin's 97 Seven operates under the Darwin Christian Broadcasters Association Inc. Constitution, including a Statement of Faith.

As a licensed community broadcaster Darwin's 97 Seven complies with the Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice.

Darwin's 97 Seven is a member of Christian Media and Arts Australian (CMAA) and embraces the CMAA diversity statement (attached).

2.1 Support for conventional marriage

The Statement of Faith of Darwin's 97 Seven includes that *Biblical marriage is a holy relationship ordained by God and is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.*

Consequently Darwin's 97 Seven supports the current definition of marriage and does not support a change to the present law.

2.2 Serving our community of interest

Darwin's 97 Seven serves the Christian community of the Greater Darwin Area by providing programming specific to its needs and interests. This includes discussion of a wide range of topics from a Christian faith-based perspective in a manner and at a depth not generally provided by other media.

2.3 Fair and balanced coverage to inform Christians

In the present debate about marriage reform, while upholding the traditional Biblical view of marriage consistent with our Statement of Faith, Darwin's 97 Seven will seek to provide a fair coverage of the range of views on the marriage issue, especially as they relate to the need for Christians to be well informed while considering their faith response to this legislative and culture issue.

2.4 Respect for diversity and freedom of religious expression

Darwin's 97 Seven upholds the importance of diversity in the Australian community. As a Christian community broadcaster, and part of the broader community broadcasting sector, we embrace the diversity policy of Christian Media and Arts Australia (CMAA), which includes the following:

It follows from CMAA's establishing principles that, as a Christian organisation, we believe that all people are created in the image of God and therefore are to be respected, dignified and honoured as image-bearers of God.

CMAA is committed to following the example and teachings of Jesus who specifically reached out to people across boundaries of religion, race, culture, disability, moral norms, economic circumstance and other types of difference.

CMAA is committed to likewise treating all people with respect and dignity, and moreover to working for beneficial outcomes for all.

The Policy, which informs Darwin's 97 Seven's approach, recognises that our pluralistic democracy is well served when faith-based broadcasters (and like organisations) responsibly participate in public discourse, exercising the right to religious expression, within the rule of law.

On behalf of the Board,

Phil Galvin
General Manager
6 September 2017

3 Attachment: CMAA Diversity Statement

The following is the diversity statement of Christian Media and Arts Australia (CMAA)

Diversity

CMAA supports and celebrates the principles of diversity which are hallmarks of the community based broadcasting sector.

CMAA believes that diversity is served and strengthened when:

1. organisations that represent particular Communities of Interest [as provided by the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (C'th)] are enabled to freely and genuinely serve and represent that community, while
2. *recognising and actively supporting* the rights of comparable communities of interest to do likewise, such that
3. mutual respect between diverse communities is upheld as a hallmark of Australia's pluralistic democracy.

The Christian Media and Arts Community – core beliefs

The community represented and served by CMAA derives its core beliefs from the Christian Bible and the traditional teachings of the Christian Church through history.

CMAA's core statements of faith are the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed. Members must attest to at least one of these statements which are set out in the Constitution, and can be seen at <https://mediaarts.org.au/members>

Basis of CMAA's diversity policy

It follows from CMAA's establishing principles that, as a Christian organisation, we believe that all people are created in the image of God and therefore are to be respected, dignified and honoured as image-bearers of God.

CMAA is committed to following the example and teachings of Jesus who specifically reached out to people across boundaries of religion, race, culture, disability, moral norms, economic circumstance and other types of difference.

CMAA is committed to likewise treating all people with respect and dignity, and moreover to working for beneficial outcomes for all.

Serving our Communities of Interest

CMAA members are bound to provide unique programming to serve the Christian community.

As their sector representative organisation (SRO), CMAA is likewise bound to specifically support the needs of Christian believers. This includes support for theological teaching, ministry and pastoral care.

For this reason adherence to the Christian religion, active participation in the Christian community and training in, or demonstrated knowledge of Christian theology (including practices of the Christian church), are expectations for board members, staff and volunteers both in CMAA and throughout its membership.

The free exercise of religion is an essential aspect of Australia's diverse democracy. The cause of diversity is well served when organisations which support people and communities of faith are enabled to do so, including the right to make employment choices based on appropriate religious adherence.

Policy outcomes

With regard to its own operations and those of its members, CMAA will advocate outcomes such that:

- a. All people will be regarded with respect and dignity as image-bearers of God himself, regardless of race, religion, sexuality, gender, marital status, or any other attribute.
- b. In pursuit of a diverse community media sector, the right of faith-based organisations to make employment, programming and other decisions consistent with the tenets, teachings, beliefs and values of their faith will be supported and defended.