

Tehan remains opposed to marriage equality



Member for Wannon Dan Tehan (Liberal) remains personally opposed to gay marriage but supports a conscience vote on the issue. Image: Liberal Party, Australia.

By Carol Altmann

The federal MP for Wannon, **Dan Tehan**, remains personally opposed to same sex marriage, despite growing support within his electorate for the move.

Two online polls in the past two years by the local newspaper, *The Warrnambool Standard*, reveal support for marriage equality in the south-west has grown from [57% in 2013](#) to 72% [in 2015](#), reflecting a similar trend nationally, with a 2014 poll [by Crosby-Textor showing 72% support](#).

And as revealed by Bluestone, the [current incarnation of the Warrnambool City Council](#) also contains a majority who support

marriage equality, although it has not made a formal declaration, unlike more than a dozen municipalities around Australia who have voted to support the move.

Despite this shift, Mr Tehan has not moved from his position of being personally opposed to same sex marriage, while at the same time supporting a conscience vote on the issue which would allow MPs to vote based on their individual views, not party policy.

Mr Tehan emailed us this response in answer to our question as to whether growing support for marriage equality would change his views:

"The Government's long standing position is that it supports the current definition of marriage contained in the Marriage Act 1961 (Cth), which states that marriage is a union between a man and a woman.

However, I acknowledge that there is a diversity of views in the local community about this.

If the issue is to be addressed in this term of the Commonwealth Parliament, the question of a conscience vote will be considered by Government Members and Senators in the Coalition party room.

While I support the traditional definition of marriage, I also support this issue being dealt with as a matter of conscience."

A cross party bill on same-sex marriage will be introduced when Federal Parliament resumes on August 11, which those in support of the change hope will lead to a vote on the issue.

The Liberal Party is expected to decide a week later, on August 18, whether it will allow a conscience vote so its members can vote against the party policy if they so choose.

Lobby group [Australian Marriage Equality](#) says its figures

show only four more lower house MPs need to declare their support for marriage equality for there to be a majority, with the Senate showing a one-vote majority.

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