

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR MP ABOUT MARRIAGE

We have been encouraging many of you to contact your local MP and share with them why it is important to you that marriage, as the union of a man and a woman, is protected and preserved. But it can be very daunting going to meet with a member of federal parliament and many of us might think that what we personally have to say will not be helpful or make much of a difference. But as a member of their electorate, your MP is interested in what you think- after all, it's thanks to people like you that they have their job. Also, you never know how your personal witness or discussions will impact them, even though you may never find out.

We have developed a few helpful tips to utilise when going to see your MP:

- Google your MP before you meet with them. If possible, find out where they stand on the definition of marriage.
- Take some time to prepare a few key points you would like to make. This might include things like what marriage means to you, the benefits of marriage for society and the consequences of changing the definition of marriage. You may like to print a couple of good articles and provide your MP with copies to peruse in their own time.
- Say a prayer beforehand! Ask God to keep you calm and to give you the grace necessary to show your MP why marriage is important to you and to others.
- At the beginning of the meeting, be sure to thank your MP for making the time to meet with you. They are often very busy and a little gratitude can go a long way.
- Small talk is fine but the meetings usually only go for 15-30 minutes so be conscious of time and feel free to start talking about the purpose of the meeting when you are ready.
- Keep your points clear and concise. If your MP starts to go off-topic, gently bring the focus back to the discussion at hand.
- Acknowledge common ground when you find it.
- Share your personal story about your marriage or the marriages of family and friends- let your MP know how changing the definition of marriage affects you and your community.
- If your MP is supportive of marriage as the union of a man and a woman, let them know you are grateful for their support. It is also important that they know this is a voting issue for you.
- Accept that it is not always possible to agree. If you and your MP have different views on marriage, accept that and move on to address other concerns like religious freedom i.e. ask your MP if they would work to ensure Catholic schools could continue to teach that marriage is between a man and a woman if 'same-sex marriage' were legislated for.
- At the end of the meeting, thank them again for their time and attention.
- It can also be a good idea to send a follow up email of thanks with your points reiterated and anything else that could be helpful or might answer some questions that arose during the meeting.

We wish you all the very best with your meeting and will be praying for you all.
Life, Marriage & Family Centre Team