

Progressive Atheists Inc.

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Proud Member of Atheist Alliance International

Member Group of Secular Coalition of Australia



Victorian State By Election Candidate Survey

Election Date: Saturday, 31 October 2015

South-West Coast By-Election

Answers & Comments of Candidate

Rodney Van de Hoef

- 1. Special Religious Instruction:** do you approve of the minister for education removing SRI from class time in Victoria?

OTHER

Comment: I am yet to be convinced. The instruction provides an opportunity for children to learn about religion such that later in life they can form their own opinions. Removing such instruction then poses a problem, as this may be the only opportunity for some children to grasp faith, an understanding of the true meaning of Christmas or Easter, and the underlying religious basis of these events. In saying this, the minister for education has already made the delivery of such programs so convoluted, it would be difficult for any practitioner to deliver meaningful lessons in any religion in any case, for fear of offending others.

- 2. Special Religious Instruction:** do you support the removal of SRI from the education and training reform act?

OTHER

Comment: Yes, in as much as I believe schools and their school Councils are mature enough and should be empowered under the Act to provide any curriculum or instruction which may be appropriate to the students learning, with consultation with all parents to ensure any concerns are addressed prior to delivery of such instruction. If the Act is silent on this matter, I do not see why this would not be able to be delivered.

- 3. Comparative Religious Education:** are you in favour of F-10 school curriculum in Victorian schools to teach about the 5 major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism) and in addition secular humanism / rationalism?

NO

Comment: Perhaps some awareness of other religions in 7-10. Certainly Christianity should be taught in some form as it underpins much of the social fabric which Australia is today and can provide an understanding of history and faith. In terms of the 5 major religions, parents have an important role in providing an education outside of school, and may be much more adept and able to provide this opportunity to their children than can be found in a school curriculum.

- 4. School Chaplain Alternatives:** are you in favour of the Victorian government providing funding for secular welfare workers to those schools who choose not to have a religious chaplain?

YES

Comment: Labels! These are all people who should have children's best interest at heart, religious or otherwise. Appointment should be merit based, the School Council choosing the person. It is all about the individual, and how they can best be approachable and deliver methods to help children or others requiring this assistance.

- 5. Inclusive Schools:** are you in favour of Safe Schools Coalition Australia whose services aim to improve safety and inclusivity for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, their families and teachers, while taking a zero-tolerance approach to homophobia and transphobia in the school community?

OTHER

Comment: School is primarily about learning. Children will learn how to express themselves with appropriate boundaries and safety nets in place. Adults however should always be mindful of how their appearance and conduct may influence or impact the impressionable minds of children.

- 6. Respectful Relationships:** are you in favour of the new Victorian schools curriculum resource “Building Respectful Relationships – Stepping Out Against Gender-Based Violence” a new teaching resource for Victorian secondary students to learn how to build healthy relationships, understand global cultures, ethics and traditions, and to prevent family violence?

OTHER

Comment: At this stage I have not read it. School is a place for learning, any violence needs to be addressed appropriately. Parents will decide whether this resource is of benefit to students, and I expect they will communicate this back to the teachers and schools concerned, or their Local Member if it is not.

- 7. Anti-discrimination Legislation:** should religious bodies be allowed to discriminate in employment even when religious faith is not a genuine occupational qualification for that job?

OTHER

Comment: I believe strongly that every person is entitled to their own opinion. Religious bodies are entitled to make employment decisions based upon merit.

- 8. Mandatory Reporting Laws:** are you in favour of removing religious exemptions to the mandatory reporting of child abuse?

OTHER

Comment: I was not aware there were any exemptions. It is a question of who it is reported to and how tactfully, appropriately, lawfully and timely it is dealt with. Any mechanism which leads to early reporting and protection of children from further harm should be considered.

- 9. Abortion Laws:** are you in favour of maintaining the current laws on abortion in Victoria?

OTHER

Comment: I have no specific position on this matter, and consider all laws at the time of review on a case by case basis.

10. End of Life Choices: would you support a bill that allowed a terminally or incurably ill person the right to choose the manner and timing of their death, under strict safeguards, by providing humane medical assistance?

OTHER

Comment: I have no specific position on this matter, and will consider all bills on a case by case basis.

11. Medicinal Cannabis: are you in favour of developing a Victorian industry to produce cannabis for medicinal purposes?

OTHER

Comment: I have no specific position on this matter, and will consider all bills on a case by case basis.

12. Climate Change: South Australian has a renewable energy target of 50% by 2025, and the ACT has a target of 90% by 2020. Would you support a bill for a transparent target for renewable energy in Victoria akin to targets in SA and ACT?

OTHER

Comment: I believe in competition and choice. In this society, people have options to purchase renewable energy, which is fantastic. We must also consider those less fortunate who may be burdened with excessive energy costs if such targets are set. I have a leaning to ensure energy is affordable, and will consider all bills on a case by case basis.

13. Victorian Duties and Taxes: are you in favour of removing religious exemptions in the Duties Act 2000?

NO

14. Victorian Duties and Taxes: are you in favour of removing religious exemptions in the Debits Tax Act 1990?

NO

15. Victorian Duties and Taxes: are you in favour of removing religious exemptions in the Payroll Tax Act 1971?

NO

16. Victorian Duties and Taxes: are you in favour of removing religious exemptions in the Land Tax Act 1958?

NO

17. Prayer in the Victorian Parliament: are you in favour of the Lord's prayer being replaced with silent reflection (as in the ACT parliament) at the commencement of each sitting day?

NO

18. Prayer in the Victorian Parliament: are you in favour of sanctioned affirmations from religious and nonreligious worldviews, in addition to the Lord's prayer, to be said on a rotational basis at the commencement of each sitting day?

NO

END