

Senator Joe Bullock's Resignation from Federal Parliament due to the ALP No Conscience Vote

Asked the question at a meeting, "Given your views on same-sex marriage, how can you support the Labor Party?"



Senator Bullock stated in his resignation speech

"...I said a few nice things about the Labor Party and generally avoided the question. I do not imagine that my answer satisfied anyone in the room; more particularly, it didn't satisfy me.

This question has dogged me for six months. How can I, in good conscience, recommend to people that they vote for a party which has determined to deny its parliamentarians a conscience vote on the homosexual marriage question? It is a question which I regard as having a fundamental significance to the future shape of our society. The simple answer is that I can't.

This answer has consequences for me as a member of the parliamentary Labor Party, which are distinct from its consequences as a member of the party itself. As a member of the party, I am free to disagree with party policy, to lobby for change and to encourage people to join the party with a view to achieving that end. As a party member, that is something to which I am committed. As a member of the parliamentary Labor Party I have different obligations. It is a part of the job description of every Labor senator to work as hard and as effectively as they can to persuade every voter possible to direct their vote to Labor so as to maximise the prospect of a Labor victory. As a Labor senator, it is my job to tell voters that it does not matter that Labor will outlaw the conscience vote on homosexual marriage and to recommend a vote for Labor without reservation.

That is the job description of a Labor senator. It is a job which I cannot do. This is a new experience for me. For 37 years with the SDA it never occurred to me that my job might require me to do something which I regarded as wrong..."

Watch 19 minute Resignation Speech