



Transcript
The Hon Kevin Andrews MP
Member for Menzies

House of Representatives Doors - Monday 12 September

E&OE.....

JOURNALIST:

Why do you think there should be public funding for a yes or no vote?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

I believe that the general plebiscite that it allows the opportunity for both cases to be put fairly to the Australian people and to make up their minds on that basis, that's how we run referenda. This is a time honoured way in which we conduct these sorts of public discussions in Australia for over a century now and it should be the same.

JOURNALIST

Do you agree with Senator Abetz that it should be \$10 million each side?

KEVIN ANDREWS

Look, what the Prime Minister indicated was there would be, I couldn't use his exact words in his interview but some funding for a yes and no campaign. I've said that there should be a quantum of funding for the yes and no campaign. As for the exact amount that would be determined but I think it is important that there is funding so that when Australians go to the polls in terms of making a vote on this issue yes or no they are well-informed about this.

JOURNALIST:

What do you say to critics who suggest that if there is public money for both campaigns that there will be taxpayer funded hate speech?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

People who use throwaway lines like people being phobic or involved in hate speech, or whatever, haven't got much of an argument. The reality is that most Australians conduct themselves in a very proper and considered way. A few people get excited on both sides of debates about this but the reality is that an overwhelming majority of Australians are respectful of each other about these

issues, of other issues. Let's not forget we've had other debates on contentious issues in Australia in which people have conducted these debates with respect for each other and I find as I go around Australia and around the electorates that that's the way people address this issue.

JOURNALIST:

(Inaudible)... But about the cost of this given the current fiscal environment, given the amount of free media that this issue already has why is there an extra \$20 million?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Look, I'm sure you're very pleased with the reach of the media but can I tell you that there are lots of people who I come across that don't read daily newspapers, that don't actually watch the news on TV but who get certain snippets of information here or there on an issue which goes to what has been an understanding about a social arrangement around marriage. Not just for decades across Australia but across cultures and civilisations and in fact millennia, going to that inherent issue then to spend a few million dollars as has been suggested on this, I think is, at the end of the day whatever the decision is by the Australian people has to be only by the Australian people and we don't want a situation where we have people, or one group or another, come out and say well this wasn't conducted in a fair way.

JOURNALIST:

Senator Hinch has vowed to name and shame paedophiles and sex offenders during his first speech to the Senate today. What do you make of that?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Look, that's a matter for Senator Hinch. This is not directly answering your question but I've always taken the general view that we should be prudent about what we do in Parliament and yes we have enormous freedom of speech in the Parliament, we're not subject to the rules of defamation but with that goes a responsibility that we do that in a very proper, appropriate and prudent way and I'm not going to tell Senator Hinch what he should or shouldn't say but that would be the approach I would take to that subject.

JOURNALIST

Cabinet is going to decide on this quite potentially today, will you be disappointed if Cabinet says, if they suggest to the Party Room that there should be no funding.

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Look, I can't comment on that. I don't know when Cabinet is going to decide it. I'll deal with the facts as I know them. Thank you.

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