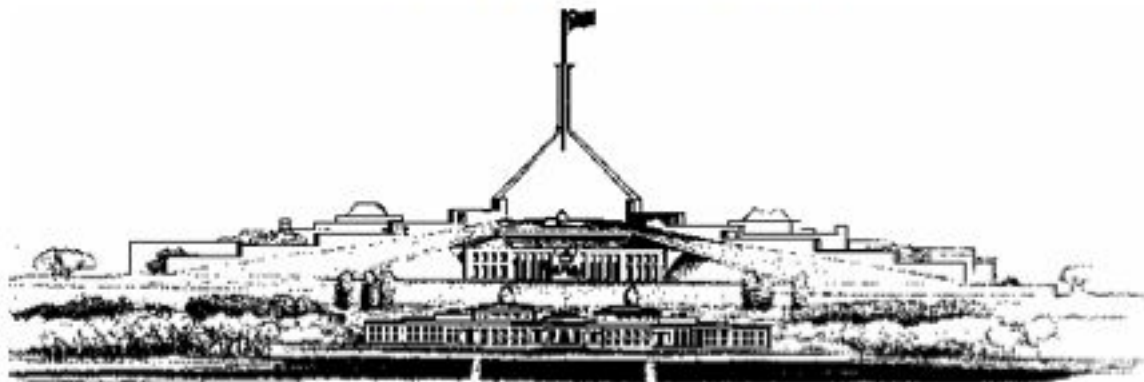




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

BILLS

**Marriage Amendment (Definition
and Religious Freedoms) Bill 2017**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Thursday, 7 December 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date	Thursday, 7 December 2017	Source	House
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Questioner		Responder	
Speaker	O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.	

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:30): I rise to support the amendment put by the member for Deakin. To me, it addresses a deficiency in the bill where there's an embedded assumption that religious beliefs are more important than conscientious beliefs. There's an assumption in the bill that says religion is more important than conscience. That is reflected in clause 47, where more rights or bestowed on an religious celebrant in the future than a civil celebrant, once the grandfathering period is over.

I have a problem with this out of principle, because, in contrast to that assumption, I believe that conscience trumps religion. Conscientious belief trumps religious belief. Indeed, the primacy of conscience is not only fundamental to the philosophy of the party to which I belong, the Liberal Party, but it is also fundamental to Christian theology. I support the wise words of the 19th century theologian, John Henry Newman, who at the time was a cardinal of the Catholic Church. He said, 'I drink to the Pope, but my conscience first.' Based on that principle of conscience being primary, I shall be supporting this amendment as well as other amendments put by some of my colleagues.