

## Same-sex marriage: preparing for a plebiscite


Same-sex marriage is on the political agenda in Australia. Depending upon which party wins government on July 2nd, the question may be put to a plebiscite, a national vote to determine the level of public support.

In preparation for this possibility, the G,S&C Committee is working on a strategy for helping congregations think through the issues and engage with the wider community. This includes:

1. **Publishing a package of resources** suitable for use by congregations. There will be a resource paper; a series of bible studies; plus a set of sermon outlines. We expect these resources to be ready for publication at Assembly in July.

2. **Conducting a series of "Marriage Matters" meetings.** These meetings will be held at several locations in regional NSW and metropolitan Sydney as the plebiscite approaches. There will be presentations from Committee members, as well as opportunities for questions to be answered by the panel of speakers. There'll be more information in our next newsletter (to be sent out after the election).


If it turns out that a plebiscite is not held, the Committee will still go ahead with publication of the resources. Apart from being of personal benefit to congregation members, we expect the resources will help people to engage in a positive way with their elected members of Parliament as they consider any legislation introduced to change the Marriage Act.



## The Challenge of Public Christianity

*G,S&C Assembly Dinner, July 5, 2016*

Christ College  
1 Clarence St, Burwood  
Tuesday, 5th July 7pm  
Cost – \$27.  
Early bird discount \$20 before June 17



**SOLAS**  
CENTRE FOR PUBLIC CHRISTIANITY

### Speakers



**David Robertson, St Peters Dundee**

David is the founder of the Solas - Centre for Public Christianity and currently Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland. He is the author of *The Dawkins Letters*, *Magnificent Obsession* and *Engaging with Atheists*. He is well known for his public presentation of the gospel and speaks and writes regularly in Scotland and beyond.

**Michael Kellahan, Freedom for Faith**

Michael is the Executive Director. He is also the Senior Minister of Roseville East Anglican Church. Before studying theology he worked as a lawyer in Canberra.

**Book now: [gsc.researcher@gmail.com](mailto:gsc.researcher@gmail.com)**

**The Committee will be hosting a dinner during Assembly week.** We are very pleased to have two speakers as our special guests for the evening. David Robertson and Michael Kellahan will talk about "The Challenge of Public Christianity", bringing their experience to a topic that is both important and timely.

Information about date, time and venue is in the flyer above. Payment for the meal will be via direct deposit to a bank account, details of which will be given once you've emailed us to book. Places are limited, so don't wait till the last minute! We look forward to seeing you there.

## New resource papers



At the 2015 Assembly, the Committee was asked to produce a resource paper on the Biblical understanding of **human gender** and its implications for Christian ethics. We were also asked to present a paper on **climate change**, following the Assembly's receiving of our report on **creation care**.

We expect to present both of the new papers to Assembly in July this year.

The Creation Care report can be found on the Committee's website: <http://www.gsandc.org.au/resources/creation-care.html>



## Christianity Everyday

If you would like the Committee to present our "Christianity Everyday" training material to your congregation of presbytery, please contact us at [contact@gsandc.org.au](mailto:contact@gsandc.org.au)

In the next couple of months we will be doing this training at Merrylands East Presbyterian Church, and also at the PY Winter Camp.

## Staying in touch online ...

The Committee is about to launch a new-look website at <http://www.gsandc.org.au> All of our resource papers will be available, as well as extra material from other writers that we have found helpful.

We also use Facebook to post news and commentary from sources around the world, to encourage readers to engage in a conversation about the issues raised.

Recent posts include news about John Dickson's conversation about same-sex attracted people and "hate speech" being deleted from Facebook; the story of Sydney University's Student Union and their attempt to force a change in the Evangelical Union's constitution; as well as the media debate about transgendered people being members of our churches.

You can keep up to date with news like this, and other aspects of the Committee's work, by liking us on Facebook - go to [www.facebook.com/GospelSocietyCulture](http://www.facebook.com/GospelSocietyCulture) .

## ... and in print

Gospel, Society and Culture regularly writes for the Presbyterian Pulse, the bi-monthly magazine of the PCNSW.

For the current edition, we interviewed Michael Kellahan from Freedom for Faith, and reported on what might happen to religious freedom in Australia if the Marriage Act is changed. We also worked with the Moderator, Kevin Murray, to present a case for thoughtful voting at the upcoming election.



In the next issue (which should be available before Assembly) you'll find more information about the debate over redefining marriage. Make sure you grab a copy when it arrives at your church.