



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Main Committee**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Petition: National Marriage Day**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 16 September 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Wednesday, 16 September 2009</p> <p><b>Page</b> 68</p> <p><b>Questioner</b></p> <p><b>Speaker</b> Morrison, Scott, MP</p>	<p><b>Source</b> House</p> <p><b>Proof</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Responder</b></p> <p><b>Question No.</b></p>
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**Mr MORRISON** (Cook) (9.49 am)—I rise to table a petition, with the signatures of 7,071 Australians, urging that 13 August be declared the annual National Marriage Day. I am therefore pleased to present this petition, and it is my pleasure and privilege to do so on behalf of these many thousands of people from all walks of life across our nation. They have a common view that there are undeniable correlations between family breakdown and other pathways to poverty, educational failure, serious personal debt, crime, welfare dependency and addiction. These petitioners, in recognition of the positive contributions that intact, stable marriages make to the wellbeing of children and society, call upon the House of Representatives to demonstrate its support for marriage by declaring 13 August each year to be National Marriage Day.

This is a good news story and one which demonstrates that the positive values which made Australia the nation it is today are alive and well. Momentum for this initiative has been building for some time. It reached a crescendo on 13 August this year when many hundreds came together in the Great Hall of our parliament to hear testimonies showing that marriage can survive and prosper through thick and thin. Delegates heard a stirring address from noted UK broadcaster and barrister, James Bogle, which I was pleased to be able to attend and listen to. The event was one that will continue to engender discussion amongst the Australian people, particularly with the appointment of our former Governor-General, Major-General Michael Jeffery and Mrs Marlene Jeffery as marriage ambassadors—and what fine ambassadors they make for marriage across this country.

There are many threats to marriage in our society but the greatest threats are those that are posed from within. For someone who is approaching their 20th anniversary in January of next year, anniversaries are things to celebrate because they do not just happen; they come as a product of two people working hard on their marriage. In my case the vast majority of that credit goes to my wife, Jenny, given the work that we all do in this place which puts great stress on marriages. Marriages take effort and I think it is a reminder through this petition that, while there are many threats that come from without to a marriage, the greatest threats to marriages are those that happen within. We all must continue to commit ourselves to this great institution that provides such a wonderful opportunity to bring children into this world.

The National Marriage Day breakfast has been primarily sponsored by the Australian Family Association and I warmly commend the efforts of all those who have brought this vital initiative forward, including Mary Louise Fowler and my parliamentary colleague Senator Guy Barnett, amongst many others. Marriage does matter. It is a strong framework for offering a safe, loving and positive environment into which children may be brought. Marriage is an investment in the social fabric of our great nation and a means of delivering social harmony and stability. I commend to all members the great value of recognising these attributes, and I particularly thank my wife, Jenny, for the contribution she makes to our own marriage.

*The petition read as follows—*

To the honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives:

We, the undersigned citizens of Australia draw to the attention of the House of Representatives, the undeniable correlations between family breakdown and the other pathways to poverty, educational failure, serious personal debt, crime, welfare dependency and addiction.

In recognition of the positive contribution that intact, stable marriages make to the well-being of children and society we call upon the House of Representatives to demonstrate its support for marriage by declaring the 13th August each year as National Marriage Day.

from 7,071 citizens

Petition received.