

FAMILY IMPACT STATEMENTS

Family First proposes that a Family Impact Assessment Commission be established to provide analysis and advice on the impact of family wellbeing and stability of legislation and policy proposed or in existence. Such advice is to be available to both government and the community.

Family First proposes that this Commission undertake the following:

- facilitate informed debate on family issues, involving a cross-section of interests from the government, academic and community sectors and encourage public participation in the debate in regard to government policy and legislation proposed or in existence on a referral basis.
- raise public and government awareness and promote better understanding of family issues, including the importance of stable relationships (inclusive of marriage), the developmental needs of children including their need for stable family structure and of the parenting role and the effects of public policy.
- engage with government and parliament to promote better policy and legislative outcomes for the enhancement of family wellbeing and stability.
- promote, stimulate, purchase and publicise research on families and the well being and best interests of children and to identifying new and emerging policy issues.

Family First recognises that the community has a broad range of family types including families related by blood, adoption, kinship and through remarriage or re-partnering. Acknowledgment of family units as being part of more extended family relationships is also important. The Commission will take into consideration the diversity of family arrangements and the best interests of children and the needs and beliefs within those groups as analysis and advice is formulated to government, parliament or the community.

Family First recognises that there are a number of government and private agencies and other services that already provide important policy advice and research concerning family. The Commission will be established, especially, to assist in the formulation of Family Impact Statements in relation to particular aspects of public policy or legislation so that parliament and the community are able to make well informed judgments.

The Commission may undertake or contract specific research and will also serve to collect and summarise research, analysis, advice and comment from a range of public and private bodies with an interest in the well being of families.

In proposing the terms of reference for the operations of the Family Impact Assessment Commission Family First will advance the following as foundational principles:

Principle 1

The family is the foundational unit that provides stability, wellbeing and sustainability to our society

Principle 2

Commitment, stability, economic and legal foundations and resilience are essential for healthy marriages and all family relationships

Principle 3

The family's essential function is that of being the most basic social unit in which the good of each member is promoted through the fostering of respect, love, nurturing and care

Principle 4

The interests of children are best served by growing up in a happy, understanding, safe home created by a loving mother and father

supported by the extended intergenerational family and a supportive social, legal and economic foundation.

Principle 5

Successful family relationships require a balance of the rights, duties and responsibilities of each member.

Principle 6

Marriage between a man and a women is the surest approach to the establishment of stable family life and is therefore worthy of positive support and promotion by government and society

It is the intention of Family First to work to support legislative reform that works towards greater security, stability and health in family life and relationships. Family First will advocate strongly for the needs of families in accordance with these principles when assessing all new legislative or policy proposals and in reviewing existing policy and legislative frameworks.

Accordingly, we will seek to ensure that systematic and rigorous analysis and research is employed to ensure that each policy or legislative position or proposal is accurately assessed in the light of these principles and any new evidence concerning the needs of families.