

From: Mark Maley
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 10:41 AM
To: DG-News All Staff <DG-NewsAllStaff@abc.net.au>; Alan Sunderland
<Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Covering the same-sex marriage debate

Hi All,

Now that the government has announced the postal plebiscite, the focus has returned well and truly to the rights and wrongs of same sex marriage and the changing of the Marriage Act.

Please remember that approximately 40% of the population opposes the change and more importantly that the ABC does not have a position on the issue.

It is very important that we are impartial and that all perspectives are given a fair hearing and treated with respect by the ABC.

In this charged environment I would also urge everyone to be circumspect on social media – advocating for one side or the other will make it more difficult for the ABC to be seen as impartial. The more high-profile you are the more important discretion is.

Language is also important. The preferred terminology is same-sex marriage, rather than ‘marriage equality’ or ‘gay marriage’. See the full guidance [here](#).

Some people will inevitably be offended by arguments and statements made by both sides. That cannot be avoided and we should not censor any debate conducted in good faith.

However, the editorial policies also state that we should not offend our audiences without editorial justification and we should not be seen to condone or encourage prejudice and discrimination. To the greatest extent possible we should be facilitating a vigorous but also civil debate. If you think any content may cross the line don’t hesitate to seek advice from your manager or from me.

A reminder you can find the editorial policies [here](#)

Impartiality guidance [here](#)

And Harm and Offence guidance [here](#)



Mark Maley
Editorial Policy Manager, News

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[REDACTED] F +61 2 8333 2505

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From: Michele Fonseca
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 9:31 PM
To: Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>
Cc: Mark Maley <Maley.Mark@abc.net.au>
Subject: Re: Same Sex marriage matter

Thanks for this Alan, I understand the points you make. I'm on a day off tomorrow but I think it would make sense if you could meet with Phillipa and possibly [REDACTED] to explain where the Ed Pols team is coming from and what your considerations are. If it's ok with you I'll suggest to Phillipa that you are happy to talk tomorrow afternoon, and I'll leave it with her to set up a meeting if required.

Thanks again,

Michele

On 10 Aug. 2017, at 9:07 pm, Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au> wrote:

Michele

The first point to make is that if the ABC Pride group have questions about our editorial policies and advice we stand ready to engage with them any time they like, and talk this stuff through.

It is really important that they feel able to have a direct line to the Ed Pols team at any point. I am around tomorrow afternoon once I am back from Wagga, and I am happy to talk to a delegation from the group if that would help.

On the statistics referenced in Mark's email and my email last year, that simply refers to the best and most reliable recent data we have from reputable opinion polls, which put the level of public support for same sex marriage at around 60%.

The preference for same sex marriage as a term (over marriage equality) is nothing new - it has been long standing advice going back quite some time - we simply reminded people of the existing advice. I am happy to talk through the thinking of it in more detail, but it was preferred because marriage equality is a more contested notion that involves value judgements that not everyone shares. Opponents of same sex marriage would argue that the proposed change is not about establishing equality, but what is not contested by anyone is that, on a purely factual basis, the proposed change will allow people of the same sex to marry. I think it is an interesting point about not confusing sex and gender and whether, perhaps a totally new and different term might better capture the proposed change, but I am not sure marriage equality is the term that will solve that particular issue.

And finally, no one would ever suggest that ABC News is exempt from the laws of the land in any way. But we have a job to do in covering this debate and we need to do that without fear or favour.

As ever, these things are much better handled if staff who have concerns and issues talk to us rather than about us, and so I would encourage communication at the earliest opportunity.

A

Sent from my iPad

On 10 Aug 2017, at 7:43 pm, Michele Fonseca <Fonseca.Michele@abc.net.au> wrote:

Hi - can I get your thoughts on the issues raised below please?

Thanks, Michele

Begin forwarded message:

From: Phillipa McDermott <McDermott.Phillipa@abc.net.au>

Date: 10 August 2017 at 4:30:13 pm AEST

To: Michele Fonseca <Fonseca.Michele@abc.net.au>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Same Sex marriage matter

Hi Michele,

Just want to bring the second point below to your attention and see if we should run it by Alan Sunderland. The conversation is heating up here internally and there are some staff wellbeing issues that [REDACTED] and I are working on with the Pride group but below was part of the email chain and it caught my eye from a diversity perspective I think it's important.

- Where is this 40% coming from? And why is it not referenced in this email?
- "Marriage Equality" was incorporated as a term to include gender diverse especially non-binary and intersex people in to this conversation. Confusing the terms gender and sex as implied by the term "same-sex marriage" .
- "Some people will inevitably be offended by arguments and statements made by both sides. That cannot be avoided and we should not censor any debate conducted in good faith." I think this would be a good moment to remember that the ABC is not exempt from the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Regards



Phillipa McDermott
Head of Indigenous Employment and Diversity

P 028333 5300

E mcdermott.phillipa@abc.net.au

W www.abc.net.au

A 700 Harris St Ultimo



I acknowledge and respect the traditional owners of the land that I work on –that of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 11:34 AM
To: Mark Maley <Maley.Mark@abc.net.au>
Cc: Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Covering the same-sex marriage debate

Yes, that's all what I would have assumed, so thanks for confirming... was just wondering if that thorny issue had been tackled explicitly in Ed Pols. Maybe it's best it isn't, because it just creates more fodder for critics, but I do hope that's conveyed or clear to particularly younger staff.

I'm not sure I'd agree that our impact as private citizens is necessarily less than being part of an ABC collective, but that's a whole other debate! Believe me, I'm on board with the caution required.

I don't envy your task on this -- The range of what intelligent and thoughtful employees, across a range of very different roles, will consider reasonable behaviour is large indeed.

Good luck to us all...

From: Mark Maley
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 11:23 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Covering the same-sex marriage debate

Hi [REDACTED]

This is always a very difficult area where views will differ. The short answer imo is that low-key participation is OK. i.e. if you're just an anonymous face in the crowd it does no harm.

In my view you don't completely lose your rights as a citizen when you join the ABC and that includes the right to express your views on political issues and to be politically active. However, you definitely give up some rights when you sign that employment agreement. By joining the ABC – and particularly if your role is journalistic or high profile – you have to consider the impact of any external activity on the ABC and on your own effectiveness as a journalist..

There's no doubt that public activism affects journalists' ability to do their job since the perception of impartiality and objectivity is central to our effectiveness and is imbedded in the charter and the ed pols. Likewise staff publicly expressing views on contentious issues affects the image of the ABC as a whole. It is an unfortunate fact of life that we are under constant attack for bias mostly from the right but also from the left and we need to manage that.

So for us it's a matter of risk management – balancing the legitimate desire of people to express their rights as private citizens with the potential for harm to the ABC and their personal reputations.

My advice is always to be cautious and conservative. Our collective role as part of the ABC is much more important than any impact we have as private citizens. And don't identify yourself as an ABC employee if you are taking part in contentious public debates.

M

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 10:59 AM
To: Mark Maley <Maley.Mark@abc.net.au>
Cc: [REDACTED] Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>
Subject: RE: Covering the same-sex marriage debate

Mark –

Thank you for this.

A question.. do any of the policies cover the right of ABC employees to, say, attend rallies etc? I note the External Work and Editorial Conflicts Guidance Note says, "Commenting directly on a public debate through writing comment articles, participating in debates, **speaking at rallies or forums** is high risk." But there'll be many staff members who at least want to attend in their own time. Where will they stand? And what consequences would they face?

You are right and timely to put this alert out. I would note that I don't necessarily think the main problem lies with the high-profile employees, who are big enough and ugly enough to know the consequences and wear them. My worst fear is that in particular the younger staff are drawn into a political bunfight. ([REDACTED] – hello! That's where you are coming in I assume)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Editorial Policy Manager, News

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F +61 2 8333 2505

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From: Alan Sunderland
Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2017 12:48 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Thanks for referring this on to me [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it is probably useful to respond on a range of both specific and broader issues. Apologies if I am going over ground you already well understand, but better to be on the safe side [REDACTED]

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3. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
4. In relation to advice sent out on the issue of covering same sex marriage, there were two notes – one for News staff and one for Radio. I have attached both. As you will see, the News note went to News staff, while the Radio one went to Radio staff but included the News note as well. Both went out on Thursday 10th August – one around 1000 and the second around 1200 . I am not sure if and when either or both of those notes were circulated to [REDACTED] staff, but [REDACTED] may be able to advise.
5. Neither note was a 'directive'. Rather, it was a recommendation that people be circumspect on social media, and a reminder of the need for impartiality in relation to ABC content. The notes served as a reminder of existing policies (social media policy and editorial policy) that all staff should already be well aware of, rather than any statement of new policy.

Hope that helps, and let me know if you need anything further.

Cheers
A

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2017 10:53 AM
To: Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

Good morning Alan,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I am looking into a matter that arose last week and am asking for your assistance (as recommended by [REDACTED]) regarding [REDACTED]

Specifically, my question relates to the [REDACTED] editorial policy, and if so what policy section in particular.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The question in particular is regarding [REDACTED] the "marriage equality [plebiscite] postal vote"

This is one part of a larger issue at the moment [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I am aware of an Editorial Direction that as far as [REDACTED] and I can determine went out on Thursday 10 August on this particular issue, but I cannot say whether an editorial direction was issued to presenters, editors etc prior to the 10th. Any knowledge you could share there would be of assistance or in the alternative [REDACTED] whether or not the Same-Sex Marriage editorial direction was issued or not.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Thank you very much for your assistance and I look forward to your reply.

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 August 2017 1:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 8:35 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

Hey [REDACTED],

This is [REDACTED] I was talking about [REDACTED] I don't know if this helps

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Alan Sunderland
Sent: Monday, 14 August 2017 8:57 AM
To: Michael Millett <Millett.Michael@abc.net.au>; Sophie Mitchell <Mitchell.Sophie@abc.net.au>
Subject: FW: Covering the same-sex marriage debate

Mick/Sophie

Here are the internal notes that were circulated last week. All the links go to publicly available content except one, which I have reproduced as an attachment.

In sending these to the Minister, it might be worth pointing out that:-

- None of this is new policy. It simply reminds staff of existing policy.
- None of this is in any way a suggestion, as has been mischievously reported in some media, that we are asking our staff to 'stop being biased'. There has been no bias in our coverage.
- It was not issued in response to any concerns about our staff and their work, and it was not issued in response to any external criticism.
- From time to time, we provide additional guidance and advice to staff on significant or controversial issues, and this is simply part of that ongoing process.

A

From: Michael Mason
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2017 12:02 PM
To: Michael Mason <Mason.Michael@abc.net.au>
Subject: Covering the same-sex marriage debate

Hi All,

With a time-frame now decided for the same-sex marriage postal plebiscite, ABC staff will again be covering the issue of same sex marriage.

A note was circulated to News staff this morning, which I have included below for your information.

As was acknowledged in the News note, this can be a challenging issue to cover, as there are a wide range of views in the community and for many, it touches on deeply held beliefs. Please remember to always be respectful, balanced and impartial.

I will be sending out further information soon with more detailed advice on some particular issues Radio staff may face, but as always, a quick review of our [editorial policies](#) will have you on safe ground.

There is also a link in the News note to guidance on appropriate language – ABC preferred terminology is 'same-sex marriage'.

I'm looking forward to hearing the in-depth, quality coverage that the community relies on from ABC Radio – I know we will facilitate an informative and civil debate.

Many thanks,

Michael

Note to News Staff

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Now that the government has announced the postal plebiscite, the focus has returned well and truly to the rights and wrongs of same sex marriage and the changing of the Marriage Act.

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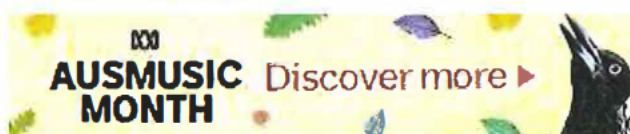
Impartiality guidance [here](#)

And Harm and Offence guidance [here](#)



Michael Mason
Director, ABC Radio

P +61 2 8333 2600 E mason.michael@abc.net.au
T [@michaelmasonp](#)



Same sex marriage - language debate

Both sides of the debate on same-sex recognise that language is an important tool in framing the debate about changes to the Marriage Act.

There are three terms commonly used in the debate: gay marriage, same-sex marriage and marriage equality. They are sometimes used interchangeably but each has slightly different meanings and connotations.

Marriage Equality

Proponents of change frame the debate in terms of equal rights and discrimination, hence their use of the term “marriage **equality**”.

The current ALP sponsored bill in Parliament is therefore called the *Marriage Amendment (Marriage Equality) Bill*.

But opponents of change dispute that discrimination and equal rights are at issue, claiming “*This appeal to equality and non-discrimination gets things the wrong way around. Justice requires us to treat people fairly and therefore not to make arbitrary, groundless distinctions.*”¹ They claim real-life differences in gender legitimise different treatment by the law in this area and that marriage “*has an intrinsic or natural meaning prior to anything we may invent or the state may legislate*” (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference). From their point of view, the term is loaded and tendentious.

Gay Marriage

Increasingly, proponents of change have objected to this term on several grounds.

- They prefer ‘marriage equality’ because it frames the debate in the way they believe most supports the cause.
- Some believe it implies that it is a different, inferior sort of marriage. Some conservatives believe it indicates that LGBT people are claiming superior, special rights.
- Some people, who are not heterosexual, including many lesbians, do not identify with this term. It is sometimes used pejoratively.

However, this is the traditional term and continues to be used by both proponents and opponents of change.

Same-sex Marriage

In recent years, same-sex marriage has been seen as the most ‘neutral’ of the three terms. It is probably the most widely used in the media, according to Pew Research in the United States.

Recommendation

All three terms are widely-used, and to many people they have become almost interchangeable. However, it is recognised that

¹ <file:///C:/Users/MALEYM7Z/Downloads/DMM-booklet%20web%20version.pdf>

- a. Use of the term 'marriage equality' does carry the connotation of support for change
- b. The term 'gay marriage' while widely used and legitimate, carries within it some negative connotations
- c. Same-Sex marriage seems to be the most sensible neutral term.

We therefore recommend that it is the term you should reach for when reporting on this issue – although the others are acceptable if used with care and thought.

From: ABC Language [mailto:[REDACTED]] **On Behalf Of** ABC Language
Sent: Wednesday, 23 August 2017 6:43 PM
To: Alan Sunderland <Sunderland.Alan@abc.net.au>
Subject: [Test] ABC Language Report August 2017

"Hi Alan,

Tiger" — ABC Corporate Communications

To send feedback about this test campaign, reply with a message above this bar.

[View this email in your browser](#)

ABC Language Report August, 2017



Hello,

Welcome to the language report for August, 2017.

This report contains: some additional terminological guidance around Yes and No campaigns, whether it's a marriage survey or a postal plebiscite, [REDACTED]

As ever, this report is divided into sections:

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED: the sterner stuff explicit guidance for (or against) certain terms or phrases.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION: areas of language where the answers may not be so clear cut

INPUT APPRECIATED: where we ask you your thoughts on language use, and how to deal with it

CLICHE OF THE MONTH: from the annals of overuse

As ever, any linguistic bugbears, yuan-ti or direwolves should be reported to the nearest ABC Language [email inbox](#).

Yours in usage,

Tiger Webb

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Yes vs No campaign

From ABC News:

Do we have a ruling on how to delineate the yes and no supporters in the same-sex-marriage debate?

Eg: Andrew Laming says a boycott from 'yes' supporters would be a 'spit in the eye' for all Australians.

Do we need the quotation marks? Single or double? Capital Y and N?

What do other style guides advise? See the following, overwhelmingly scientific, tally:

Style guide	Capitals	Single '	Double "
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BBC	✓	✗	✗
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Guardian	✗	✗	✗
----------	---	---	---

AP Stylebook	✗	✗	✓
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In the opinion of ABC Language, quotation marks are best avoided: they can resemble speech/attribution. Lower-case yes and no risks ambiguity, scans poorly, and makes us look a bit like the Guardian. Capitalisation was considered best for references to official movements, but lowercase for casual reference.

The Yes campaign, a group of No supporters, but the Prime Minister is among those who will vote yes in the upcoming marriage survey.

Plebiscite, survey, vote, marriage poll

From [REDACTED], at ABC News Digital:

Are we really calling it a postal 'plebiscite'? I was discussing this with [REDACTED] last week and we were thinking that as it's non-compulsory and not being run by the AEC it could be a 'vote' but not really a 'plebiscite.'

Its official name is Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey. Given the considerable audience confusion around survey, it is important to use terminology that

- a) reflects the non-binding of the result, and
- b) the non-universal nature of a postal survey.
- c) does not say plebiscite, as it isn't really one

In line with previous usage advice on SSM matters, we recommend same-sex marriage survey. In subsequent reference or body text, generic references to the postal survey or advisory survey are fine. Terms to avoid: plebiscite, vote, ballot.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

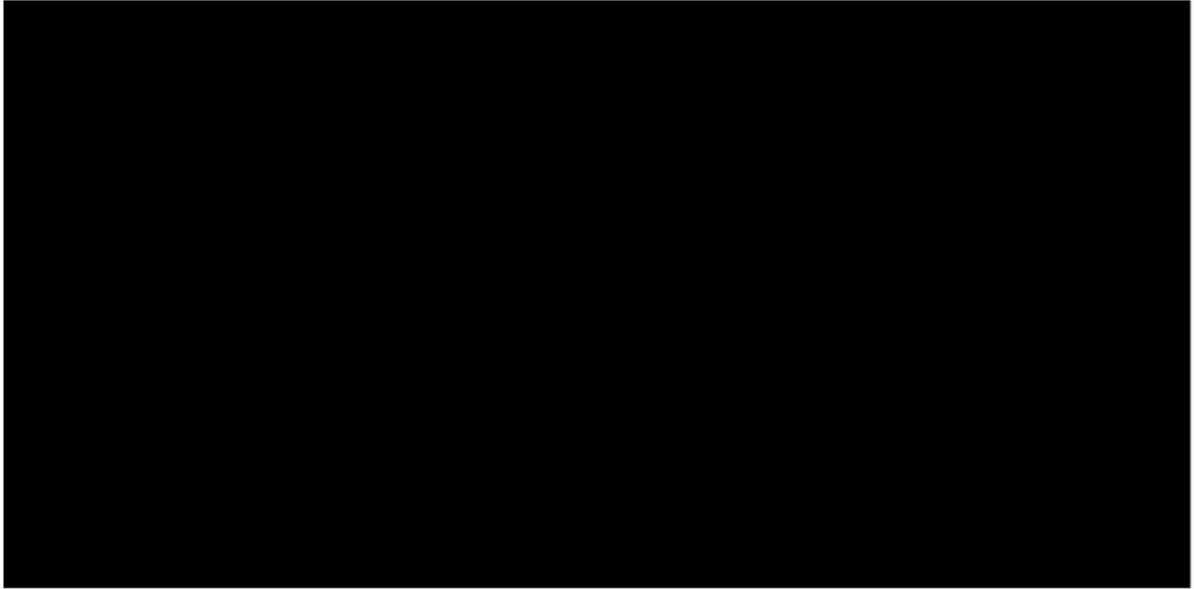
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INPUT APPRECIATED

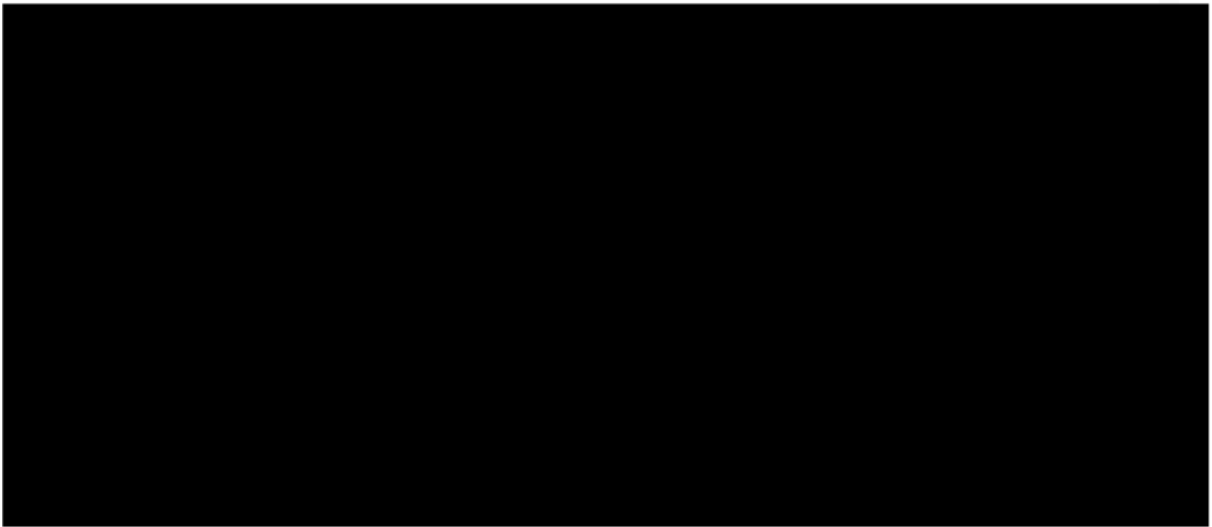
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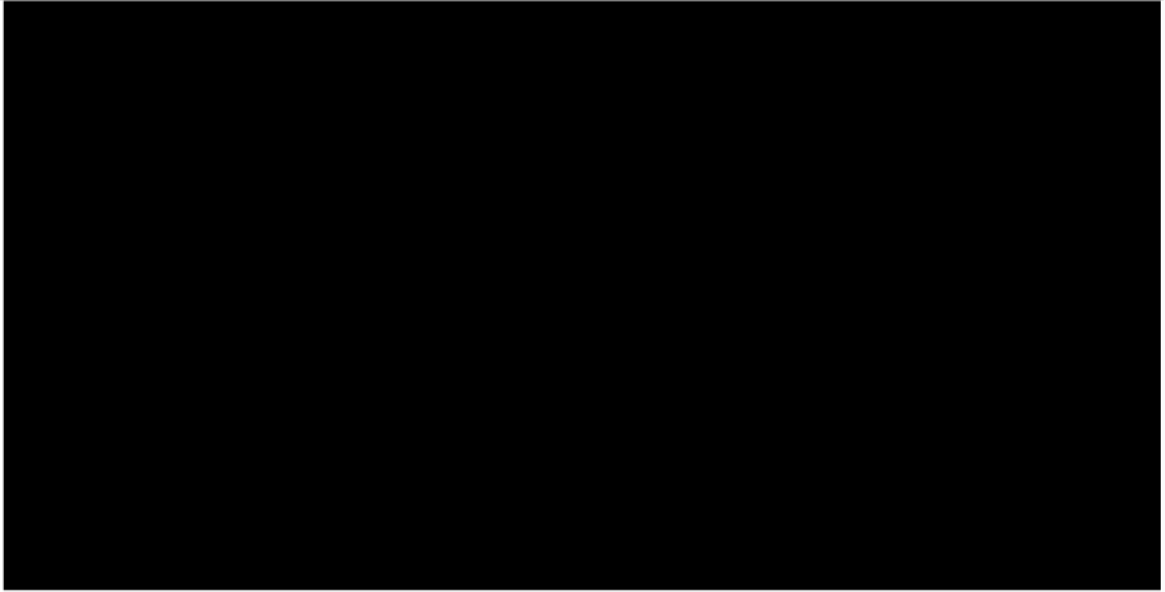
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CLICHE OF THE MONTH





This email was sent to sunderland.alan@abc.net.au
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Media · GPO Box 9994 · Ultimo, Nsw 2007 · Australia

The MailChimp logo, featuring the word "MailChimp" in a white, cursive script font, centered within a dark gray rounded rectangular background.

From: Alan Sunderland
Sent: Thursday, 24 August 2017 9:38 AM
To: DG-Users All Staff <DG-UsersAllStaff@abc.net.au>
Subject: A new ABC Language Report and a new Editorial Policies section on the website

It's that time again.

I know you've all been waiting for it, so here is the [August Language Report](#) from Tiger Webb, official wordsmith to the gentry.

But wait, there's more!

Today we launch a new link on the [ABC homepage](#) that will take you to a clear, simple summary of where to find our editorial policies and editorial complaints processes. Just look for the nifty little logo in the top right hand corner of the page.



That link will also take you to a new feature, which is a regular [blog](#) by yours truly on matters editorial. The inaugural entry deals with a brand new [guidance note](#) we have released on the gentle art of interviewing. Enjoy.

[View this email in your browser](#)

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STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

[illegible]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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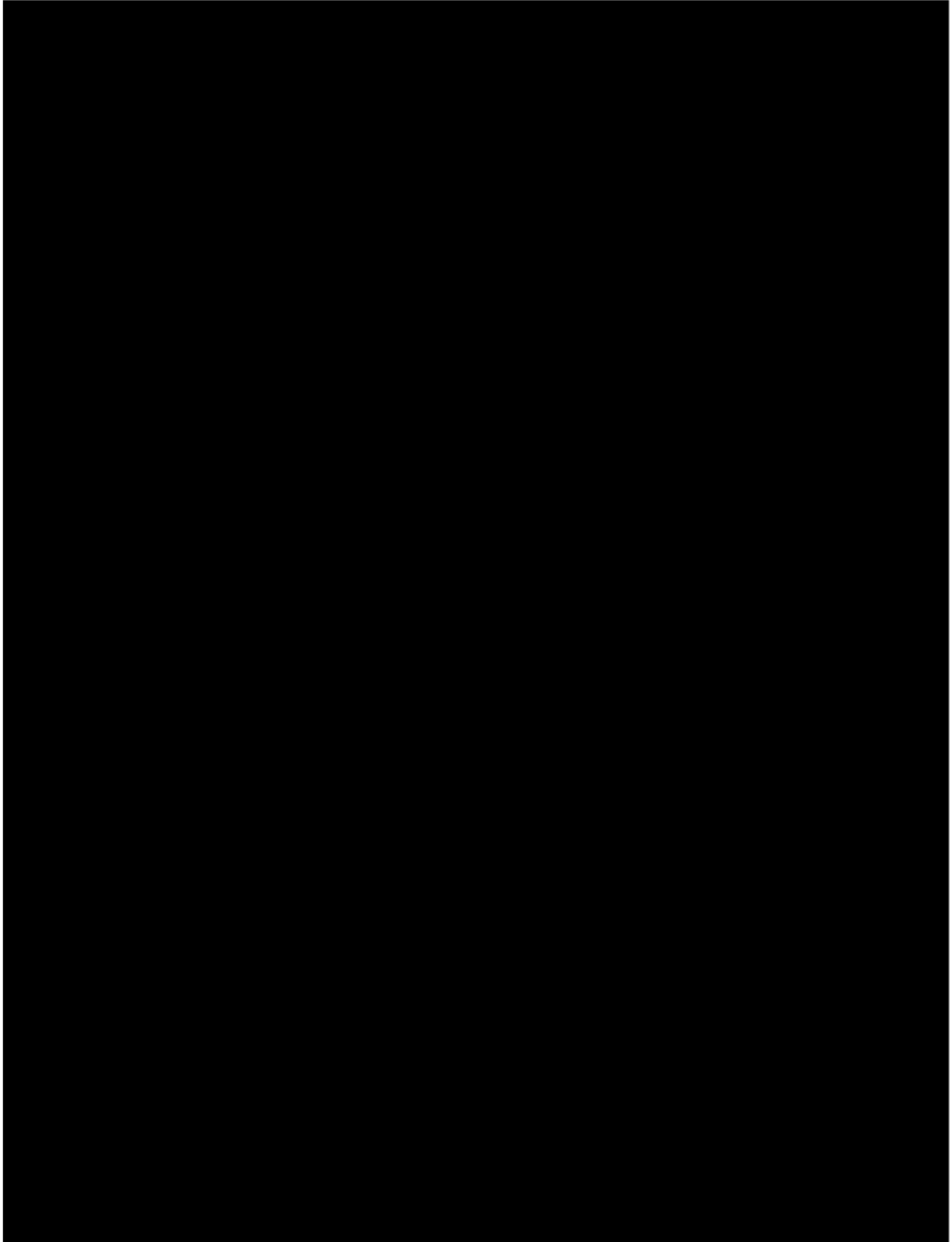
Are we really calling it a postal 'plebiscite'? I was discussing this with [REDACTED] last week and we were thinking that as it's non-compulsory and not being run by the AEC it could be a 'vote' but not really a 'plebiscite.'

Its official name is *Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey*. Given the considerable audience confusion around survey, it is important to use terminology that

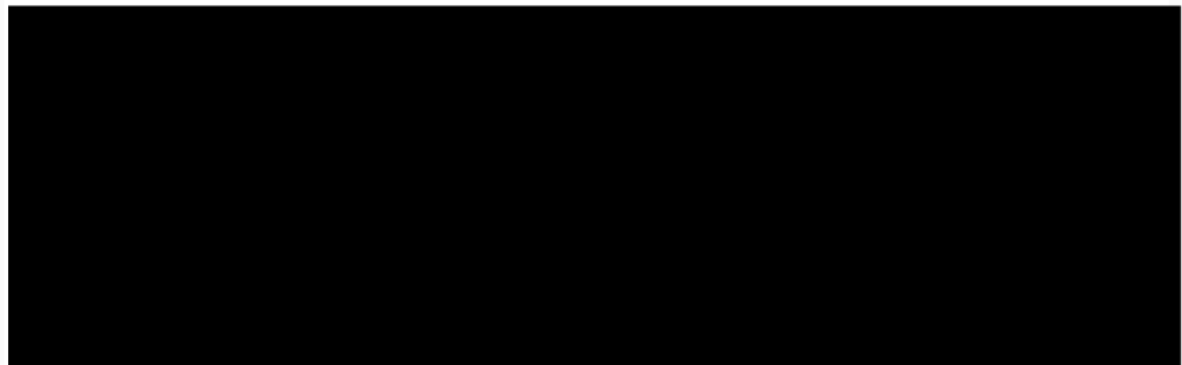
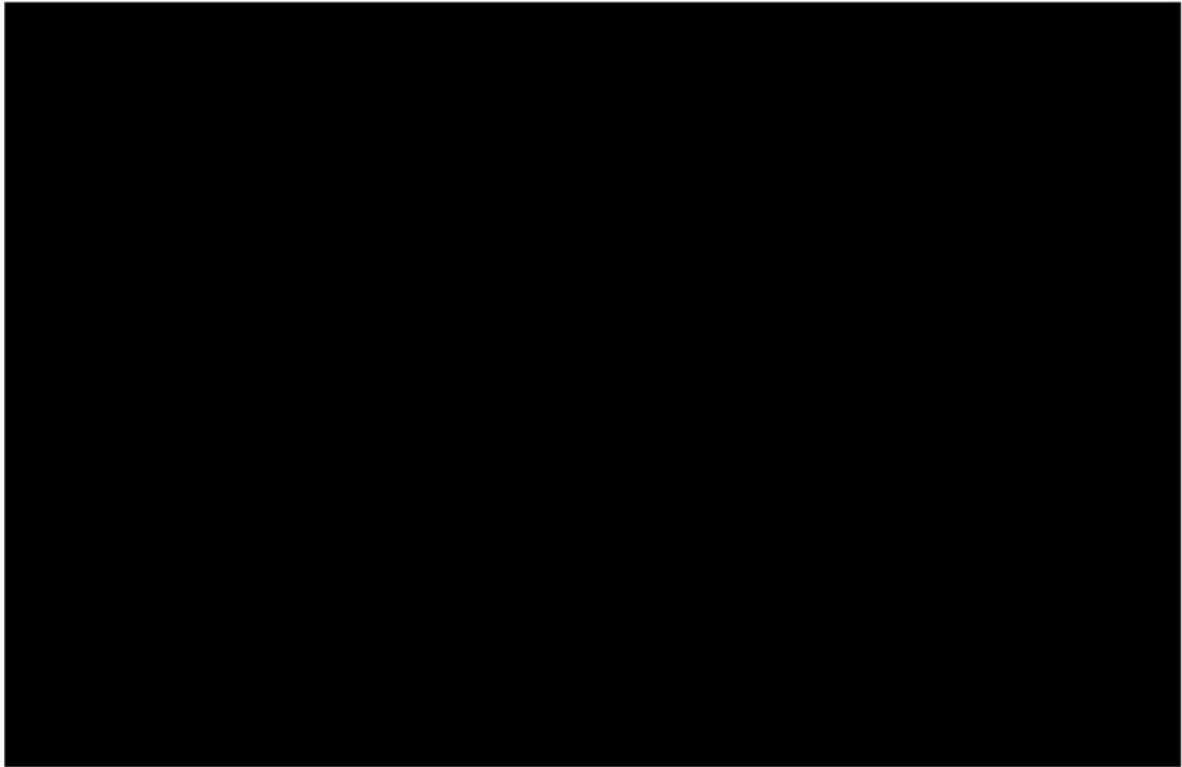
- a) reflects the non-binding of the result, and
- b) the non-universal nature of a postal survey.
- c) does not say *plebiscite*, as it isn't really one

In line with previous usage advice on SSM matters, we recommend same-sex marriage survey. In subsequent reference or body text, generic references to the postal survey or advisory survey are fine. Terms to avoid: plebiscite, vote, ballot.

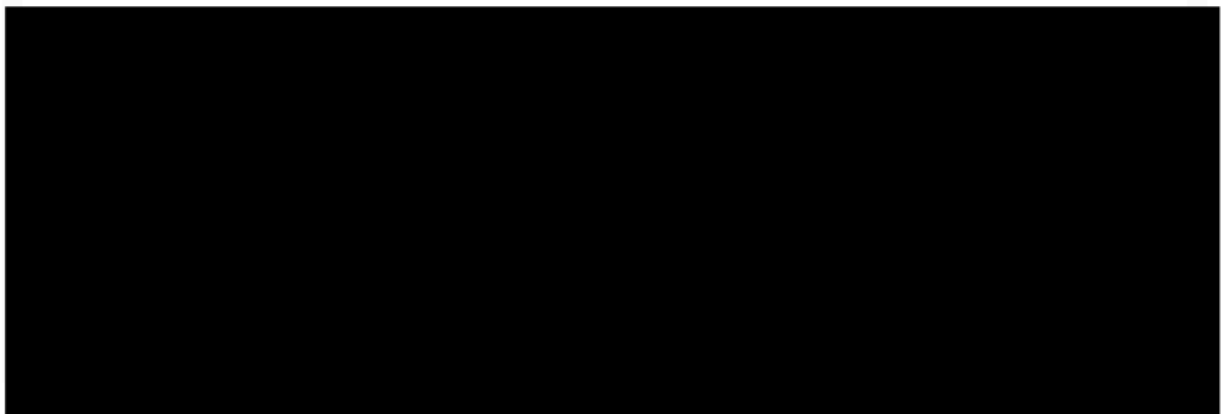
FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

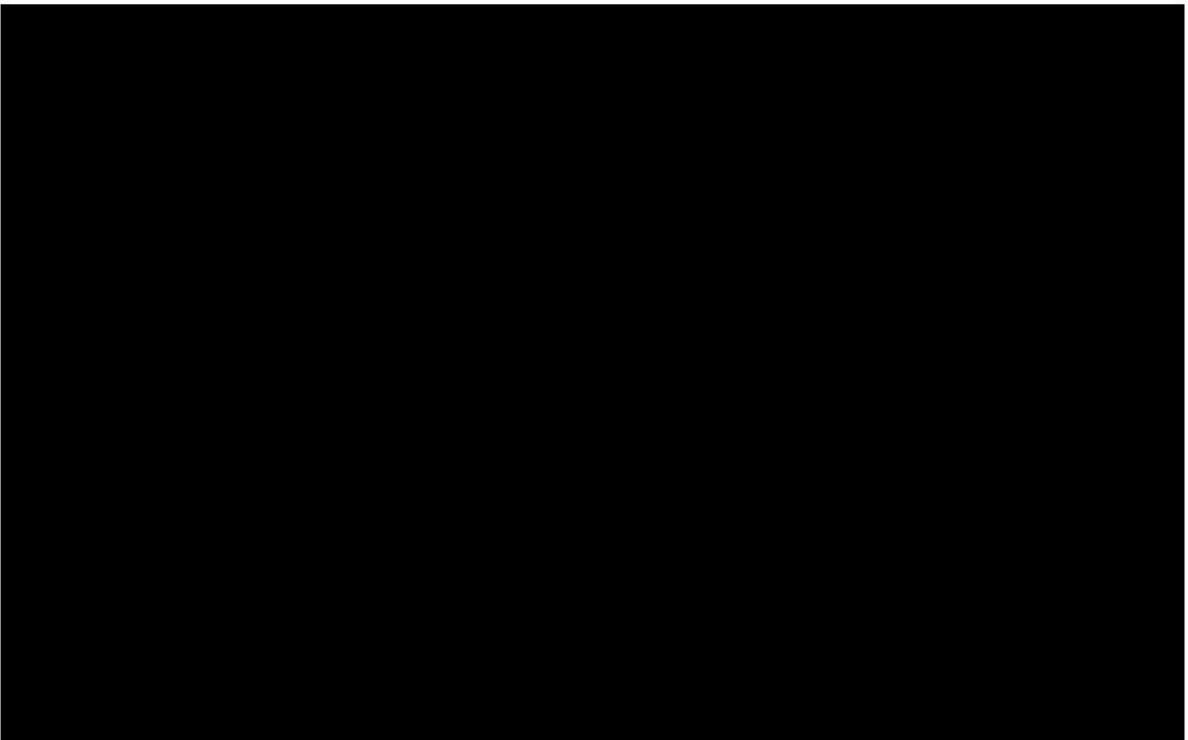
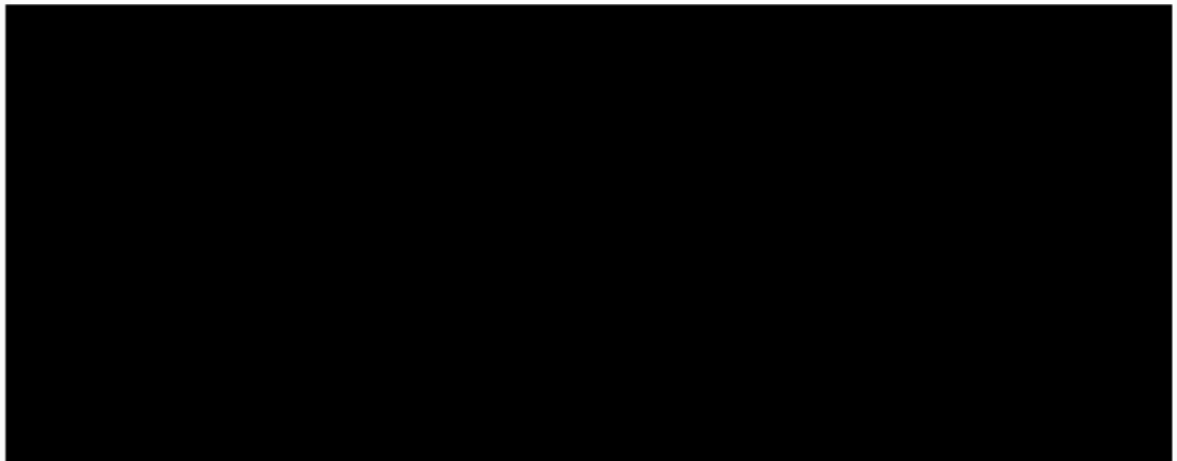


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