



The Rev. The Hon. Fred Nile MLC ED., L.Th.,

Member of the Legislative Council
Deputy Chair, Privileges Committee
Parliamentary Leader, Christian Democratic Party
Parliament House, Macquarie Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9230 2478 Facsimile: (02) 9230 2098
Email: f.nile@parliament.nsw.gov.au



MEDIA RELEASE

CDP MOTION IN SUPPORT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PASSES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY

For immediate circulation

Rev Fred Nile yesterday successfully moved a Motion in the Legislative Council calling on the Parliament to affirm “its support for religious freedom and religious liberty throughout New South Wales”.

- Below is the text of the Motion and Rev Nile’s speech introducing the Motion extracted from the Parliamentary *Hansard*.
- The full debate on the Motion can be read by visiting the Parliamentary website [[click here](#)].
- It is noteworthy that the Motion passed unanimously, with even the Greens voting in support.
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THE MOTION

1. That this House notes that on 20 August 2019, the Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedom hosted the "Religious Freedom Forum".
2. That this House notes that the following people attended:
 - (a) His Grace the Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of NSW;

- (b) His Excellency the Most Reverend Bishop Richard Umbers, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, Representative of His Excellency the Most Rev Anthony C. Fisher, OP, Archbishop of Sydney;
 - (c) His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, Archbishop of Australia and Primate of the Greek Orthodox Dioceses of Australia;
 - (d) Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton, Chief Minister, The Great Synagogue;
 - (e) His Grace Bishop Daniel, Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia, Sydney and Affiliated Regions; and
 - (f) His Eminence the Most Reverend Metropolitan Basilios, Antiochian Orthodox Metropolitan Archbishop of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines.
3. That this House affirms its support for religious freedom and religious liberty throughout New South Wales.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (20:31:20): I am pleased to briefly speak on the important issue of religious freedom. From my point of view, religious freedom is probably the most important issue facing our nation at the moment. I hope that other members share this point of view. It is an issue that has been debated and discussed regularly in the media. There have been inquiries and debates in both Federal and State parliaments. Religious freedom is perhaps the most important moral question of our time. Because of that, and with others members of the parliamentary organisation supporting religious freedom, I sponsored a Religious Freedom Forum at Parliament House on 20 August this year. We invited the most senior religious leaders—religious leaders, not just Christian leaders—in Australia to address the forum on the issue of religious freedom.

I am pleased that the most senior religious leaders in Australia agreed and took part in the forum, such as His Grace the Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of NSW, His Excellency the Most Reverend Bishop Richard Umbers, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, representing the Most Reverend Anthony C. Fisher, the Archbishop of Sydney. We were especially pleased that the Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, agreed to take part in the forum. Also in attendance from other religions was Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton, Chief Minister of The Great Synagogue. I am pleased to have had further involvement with Rabbi Elton. He agreed with my request to have a joint Christian-Jewish celebration in The Great Synagogue. It is located in the heart of Sydney on Elizabeth Street and attended by over 500 people who are Christian, Jewish and other religions.

Other representatives who took part in the forum included His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, Archbishop of Australia and Primate of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Australia; His Grace Bishop Daniel, Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia, Sydney and Affiliated Regions; and, finally, His Eminence The Most Reverend Metropolitan Basilios, Antiochian Orthodox Metropolitan Archbishop of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. I am sure those of us who know biblical history would remember that Antioch is the city in which people were first called Christians, which is why it is very important that the Antiochian Orthodox Church is active in Australia.

The forum discussed aspects of religious freedom. There have been challenges to religious freedom, including people being told they cannot speak freely about their sincerely held and legal views that are faith based. Others who express their religious beliefs have been subject to harassment from anti-faith bigots. There seems to be a gap in our legislation, with no legislative protection for people of faith and their free conscience at law. That is why the Federal Government established the Ruddock review, which recommended that protections be legislated in Australia, and particularly in South Australia and New South Wales.

There are now two bills on the Notice Paper that seek to do this—one I have introduced and one the Hon. Mark Latham has introduced, which I am also co-sponsoring. We are working together on this very important issue of religious freedom. The forum opened the debate as to what steps can be taken to protect religious liberty in New South Wales. Suggestions include to encourage the population and not just Christians who support the religious freedom petition; to share that religious freedom petition with friends, neighbours and churches; and to contact Federal MPs as well as State MPs to encourage their support for legislation that protects religious freedom in New South Wales. I encourage all members of Parliament to support those petitions. I thank them for their support. [Time expired.]

END

Media inquiries:

Rev. Hon. Fred Nile MLC (02) 9230 2478

18 October 2019

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Nile". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed text.