

## Senators slam decision to subject Father's Day ad to political advertising standards

Coalition senators today condemned a “disgraceful” decision to subject a Dads4Kids Father's Day ad to political advertising standards, as Labor attacked the government for “politicising” the tradition.

Five government senators and independent senator Lucy Gichuhi successfully moved a motion noting that Dads4Kids had aired a TV ad celebrating Father's Day since 2002 “without being classed as political”.

The motion rejected “any determination that implies honouring the role of the father on Father's Day is a political message”, after Dads4Kids was asked by FreeTV to include a “political authorisation” tag to its ad because it linked to the not-for-profit group's website.

FreeTV also noted the current political climate, which is dominated by the same-sex marriage debate.

“To now suggest it must adhere to political advertising standards is disgraceful,” Linda Reynolds, one of the senators who moved the motion, told The Australian. “In Australia we celebrate both Mother's and Father's Day, it is something to celebrate rather than politicise.”

Liberal National Party senator Barry O'Sullivan, another mover of the motion, said FreeTV's decision was an “attack on freedom of speech” and that politically endorsing the ad would have ensured it was “either dismissed or devalued” by viewers.

“The minute that happens the innocence of the ad disappears,” Senator O'Sullivan said.

“This is just bullshit. What if Qantas or the Australian Medical Association now wanted to do some community announcement, are they gone? Have they got to put this as a political ad? I say it's a wakeup call for ordinary people.”

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“Dads4Kids actively advocates against marriage equality and LGBTIQ rights. At a time when Australians are about to participate in a postal survey on marriage equality, it is understandable why FreeTV believed it was appropriate for it to include an authorisation,” manager of opposition business in the Senate, Katy Gallagher, said.

“If anyone is politicising Father's Day, it's the senators who have moved this motion.”

FreeTV acting CEO Pamela Longstaff said the Dads4Kids ad had highlighted the “complexity of determining what is political matter” in the current “heightened political environment”.

“Our industry has been struggling under excessive amounts of red tape for years and this is just another example,” she told The Australian. “We have a set of extremely complex and subjective rules to interpret by the industry regulator and are left to do our best with the consequence of potential breach of licence condition by broadcasters if we get it wrong.”

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/media/broadcast/senators-slam-decision-to-subject-fathers-day-ad-to-political-advertising-standards/news-story/ce30cdec2d7be30f5f0fc2bc524eabda>