

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
SKY NEWS LIVE
PYNE & MARLES
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SUBJECTS: Equal marriage; citizenship; Jerusalem; Christmas

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Welcome to *Pyne & Marles* for our last show of the year here on Sky News live. It's one o'clock eastern standard time on December the 8th on this historic day after the passage of the marriage equality bill. I'm Christopher Pyne and I'm here in Canberra, and Richard Marles is in Geelong. Hello Richard, it must be nice to be home.

RICHARD MARLES: It is nice to be home Christopher. I managed to get the last flight out last night but it's pretty exhausting at the end of the last week of Parliament. And because we didn't have the two week block it felt like 2 weeks was squashed into one so a lot happened this week. Fed Cats, a big night in Parliament, the Parliamentary supporters of the Geelong Football Club happened. There was lots going on, but of course it's hard this morning to be thinking about anything else other than the excitement of the passage of marriage equality which really was one of the, I think for me, the biggest moments I've had in the Parliament, you must feel that way also.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Yes it was a big day. As you know I stayed in the chamber from 9:30 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night just to make sure that nothing went off the rails and it was a very long day, a very tiring day. Others went out last night celebrating, I must admit I went home and tried to get an early night because I knew today would be another big day. But yes, it's an historic day, I've been in Parliament a quarter of a century and along with the apology for the stolen generation this is one of the biggest days in my political career and it's very humbling, really, to be part of it. That was my emotion, I felt humbled to have been part of such a massive social change in our country when we think about a short time ago homosexuality was vilified in this country.

RICHARD MARLES: Indeed, and we'll talk about this more but let's get on with the show. Obviously the biggest event during this week was the passage of marriage equality and we are going to talk a little bit more about that. This week, of course, the citizenship issue has continued to bubble along, we've had 2 members of Parliament, Senator Katy Gallagher and David Feeney be referred to the High Court, we'll talk about that. And in international news Donald Trump has announced that America will be moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which is a pretty significant step to take, we will discuss what all of that means as well. But let's start with the absolute issue of the moment, that is the passage of marriage equality,

there's now law, or at least it will be when the governor-general signs away, but have a look at this package from last night.

[video clips begin]

MALCOLM TURNBULL: What a day for love, for equality, for respect

BILL SHORTEN: And now, at last, a time for marriage equality

TONY SMITH: As there are fewer than 5 members on the side for the 'nos' in this division I declare the question resolved in the affirmative

[video clips end]

RICHARD MARLES: So Christopher you rightly said that this was one of the big moments for you in your political career. I think comparing it to the apology to the stolen generation is exactly right, for me they are the 2 moments which absolutely stand out above all we've had in the last decade, it's not as long as your period in Parliament. I think what both have in common is that whilst they have a particular focus, the apology was about those who'd been from their families, this is about same sex couples being able to be married, there is something larger in each case, a recognition of our indigenous community. But I think here it is about an acceptance, an embracing of Australia's gay community who have always been among us and playing their part in the community, but for so long have felt that they needed to be behind closed doors, but now all of that is embraced and in the open and it feels like a very remarkable and wonderful moment in our country's history.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Richard there's no doubt about that, it is a remarkable moment in Australia's history and what, of course, it talks about is that this was a long process. It could have been done years ago but it really did engage the community and the public and I think that's why it bears so much resemblance to the apology to the stolen generation because we pass a lot of legislation in Parliament, we deal tax bills and social security reform and defence industry growth, et cetera but these are the kinds of issues that engage the whole of society. And that's what the plebiscite did of course the plebiscite meant that 4 in 5 Australians voted for this social change, and 62% of those 4 out of 5 Australians voted 'yes', but they all had the chance to contribute to be part of it and I think that's why the whole country feels that this was part of their decision and it was great to see the Parliament at its best. It was 21 hours of debate just on the second reading, about another 8 hours on the consideration in detail, 125 speakers, so it was Parliament at its best.

RICHARD MARLES: Yeah look I think that's absolutely right and I know that for my part it was a speech that I thought was going to be more important and most contributions that you make on legislation, and I know that feeling was felt by MPs across the Parliament and in all the parties. And as a result I think, actually, that you mentioned the length of the debate, but the quality of the debate was so good, the contributions being made by everyone I thought were very thoughtful, spoke about their personal situations themselves, be it family, be it friends. And I think it really was Parliament at its best and we're lucky, later on in the show we'll be talking with Magda Szubanski who has been a lead campaigner in relation to this issue, but it was a fantastic moment and a great moment with the Parliament at its best.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: That's enough agreeing with each other Richard I think we now have to move on to the citizenship issue and that has been quite a turn of events for the Labor Party over citizenship, let's take a look at how that unfolded.

[video clips begin]

KATY GALLAGHER: I have formed the view that my situation should be considered by the High Court.

DAVID FEENEY: I accept that at this moment my status as a citizen in UK law remains unclear

BILL SHORTEN: What we are proposing very simply is one rule for all

MALCOLM TURNBULL: This motion debases the House

[video clips end]

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Richard, wow this issue has really rebounded on Bill Shorten hasn't it. He said that there were no Labor MPs who are under a cloud, who have already been referred, David Feeney and Katy Gallagher. There's at least another three or four that the Coalition wanted to refer but you managed to get the crossbenchers to line up with you to stop their referral. Do you think Bill Shorten's handled this as well as he could have?

RICHARD MARLES: I think Bill Shorten is handling himself consistently and appropriately throughout all of this. What we've seen from the government has been panic from day one in relation to this issue. It has been a difficult issue for our democracy and from the moment that there first seemed to be an issue here, and we've watched the law evolve before our eyes, of course it's been difficult. But a government which had an authoritative Prime Minister, a stable party room would have been able to handle this much better in its stride. There are 2 Labor MPs that have been referred to the High Court, we're confident about their situations, we think they're very different to those of Barnaby Joyce or John Alexander, but it is the process of, it is the outcome of a consensual process, or at least what we thought was going to be that. You've got a whole lot of MPs who have made it clear that they have documentation around revocation which they are not putting on the record despite the fact that we had a consensus based process here...

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Richard, how do you reconcile the fact that Susan Lamb is still a UK citizen? Susan Lamb never renounced her citizenship.

RICHARD MARLES: Susan Lamb went through the process of renouncing her citizenship, and the only issue there is that the British weren't sure that she was a citizen in the first place, so that is the only issue there. But the point is that any steps that she was required to take...

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: They asked her for the documentation, she didn't provide it. The UK asked her for the documentation, she didn't provide it, that's why she is a UK citizen.

RICHARD MARLES: She took every step she needed to take before the election and that is very different to John Alexander, very different to Barnaby Joyce. But I

just want to know whether, is Julia Banks, Nola Marino, Alex Hawke, are they going to be providing all the documentation that's required so that we can see it?

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: They already have, and all this is Labor in a desperate smoke screen throwing up every red herring they can find to prove the fact that perhaps there's an equivalence between the Coalition and Labor. Richard we've already had our people referred, Barnaby Joyce, Matt Canavan, Fiona Nash, John Alexander, Stephen Parry, we've dealt with our problems. Bill Shorten thought that he could try and push all the political pressure onto our side of the ledger and it would be our problem and it has rebounded. It is a classic exploding cigar trick and it's blown up in Bill Shorten's face and you should face the music and send off your MPs to the High Court...

RICHARD MARLES: I'm not sure that all your problems are out there and we will see how this transpires from this point on. But we should keep going on and dealing with our third issue today and this is now beyond our shores and the very big move internationally that Donald Trump said he would do during the last presidential election of moving the United States embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem which has enormous significance within the Middle East and we've already seen consequences since that announcement was made. But take a look at this:

[vide clips begin]

DONALD TRUMP: It is time to officially recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel

GEORGE BRANDIS: The Australian government will continue in our diplomatic representations to Israel from our embassy in Tel Aviv.

PENNY WONG: Our view is that this sort of unilateral action is not conducive to progress towards a two state solution.

[video clips end]

RICHARD MARLES: So Christopher, where embassies are located is a very significant decision that countries make in respect of Israel. The Australian embassy is in Tel Aviv and the Foreign Minister's made it clear that that's where it will remain and Labor certainly supports her in making that decision. But what do you think is now going to be the impact of America making such a momentous decision of moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem?

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: I think it's a very big decision and if we hadn't had such an exciting week with citizenship and marriage equality in the House of Representatives I think this would have gained much more attention in this country. The US's decision is quite historic, the impact that it might have across the Middle East, and particularly the Arab world, I don't think we truly know yet. We've already seen rioting in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with particular people calling for a Jerusalem Intifada, it's a serious decision made by the Trump administration. Other countries across the Middle East have condemned it, France and Britain have indicated that they will not follow the US's lead, but you have to say that Donald Trump promised during the election that he would move the capital to Jerusalem, he says it is recognising a reality. And certainly you and I have both been to Israel, we've both been to the Knesset, it's definitely in Jerusalem, that's where they see the centre of government. It will be very interesting to see how this unfolds and whether future US administrations keep the capital in Jerusalem.

RICHARD MARLES: Yeah look, I understand the logic of that and you and I are both supporters of Israel and the policy of both our parties is to support a two-state solution which is negotiated between the Palestinian people and the state of Israel and that's been long settled foreign policy in Australia for a long time. Whilst I understand the logic of what you're saying in relation to the Knesset being based in Jerusalem, with very difficult in the globe diplomatic forms arise and I think it makes sense to stick by them. You see that in the way in which all the diplomatic forms exist in respect of Taiwan, and we've got that in relation to the state of Israel as well and where countries locate their embassies and I actually think this is not a move which is going to result in anything that's good and I think it's very concerning. But we have run out of time for this part of the show, join us afterwards and when we will be talking with Magda Szubanski.

[advertisement break]

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Welcome back to Pyne & Marles here on Sky News Live. Richard and I are joined this afternoon by the irrepressible and very exciting and particularly happy Magda Szubanski today, welcome to the show Magda.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Thank you, lovely to be here, thank you.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: You must be starting to get a little tired now, surely.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: I'm a little frayed at the edges.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: You've been campaigning for a good 12 months on the plebiscite, trying to make sure that there was a conscience vote, then now finally the actual votes in the Parliament yesterday. But you must feel this is a bit of a crowning achievement for you and the entire 'yes' campaign.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Absolutely, I mean, really I came out nearly 6 years ago solely for the purpose, I mean also just to be who I am to the broader public, but really in support of marriage equality and I'm surprised it's taken this long. Honestly, people are saying to me it'll be over in about 6 months, nearly 6 years later but we're here. And with such a resounding vote from the people as well it's just an extraordinary moment, I'm finding it hard to form sentences, I'm a little bit tired today.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: You should have a rest.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: I should have a rest, big night last night, a lot of celebrating.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: I'd better let Richard have a go.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Let Richard have a go, okay, Richard.

RICHARD MARLES: So Magda we've seen a real sea change in attitudes, I think, over the last 10 years in relation to marriage equality. Back in 2011 we had a vote on a private member's bill in the Parliament, I think less than half the Labor caucus at that time supported marriage equality, although I'm proud to say I did back then. In terms of that shift of public attitude and everything else that you've seen during the course of this campaign, what makes you most happy about what has occurred with marriage equality becoming law?

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: I think it is a signal of that change, it's a real mark in the sand, because you can kind of feel that the world has changed and that people are okay with you, but this actually gives proof of it, irrefutable proof of it. Some people were a bit shocked, actually, because they thought they were okay then when all of the nastiness came up with the survey they went 'oh wow, not everyone is okay with us'. But I think for older LGQBQI people like me it's an incredible affirmation, and it is for all of us, there's a real – the survey was not an easy thing to go through at all and if it ever went ahead again I would have a lot of reservations about the way that this was done. But there's no doubt about it that having 62% of people vote in favour of this is just so solid and it's like they've got our back, incredible feeling.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: It's an amazing change though isn't it? 20 years ago homosexuality was still a criminal offence in Western Australian.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: I've been in the Parliament when Tasmania decriminalised homosexuality, when Western Australia did and who would've thought that in 1997 that 20 years later we'd be allowing marriage equality in Australia. I mean it is an incredible change in the social mores of the country.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Yeah, well you look at Ellen Degeneres came out in 1997 and it effectively ended her career, like for three years she was out in the wilderness, couldn't get a job, no one would take her calls, I mean people forget that because she's so beloved now, but she had a terrifying time there when she thought she'd never work again. I lived through the thing when I was younger, friends of mine in Queensland had their doors bashed down and dragged out of their bedrooms and it was full on, it was really full on. When I was young it was illegal then in Victoria and in New South Wales not until 1984 so this is living memory, this is what we grew up with and to then – I mean honestly when I was a kid it would've been 0% of people, zero. And to then have this massive, like 62% is extraordinary. Someone described it the just before as it's like a glacier moving and then suddenly it cleaves off and 'voom', but the glacier has been moving for a long time and it's because of the increased visibility of LGBTQI people. We're around, more and more people have come out and as people have realised we're not freaks and monsters they're like 'oh, we're just the people next door'.

RICHARD MARLES: And I think that is a really big part of it. You see our gay community are very active across the entirety of the spectrum, we've got business leaders, political figures, sports stars, people on our TV screens and I think as you said Magda it's made people realise that there's no difference, and people aren't monsters. And can I say I think the way you've carried the debate, particularly on behalf of the 'yes' campaign has just been done with so much dignity, it's been, I think a very important part of how this has played out. I guess the question I want to ask you is, we've seen you in this context in a different way...

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Let's get to the question.

RICHARD MARLES: In how we've seen you as a comedian on TV. How have you found the experience of being involved in social change?

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Look, when I was younger, I was about 19, I worked in a women's refuge, I've always been very interested in society and comedy is sort of a way of examining issues as well. I mean we've always done social satire so it's

never like I've been completely disengaged from that, but to be really full on into it it's not, politics is not really my thing at all but human behaviour and values and particularly with my background. I look at my father was in Poland during the war, his family hid Jewish people, those sort of things are very, very present to me. My mother of Scottish-Irish, they had a hard time, so those things matter to me a great deal but being the face of it, one of the prominent faces, I mean there's...

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Daunting.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Daunting, and you just think if I put a foot wrong I could wreck this for everyone and there really were lives at stake. it's a hell of a responsibility and I takes a toll but it's something that I'm really honoured and thrilled to have been a part of this moment and to be able to help in any way that I can.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: So Magda I've been in Parliament a quarter of a century remarkably.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Wow, you're not that old.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: I've just turned 50. I have never seen the Parliament so united on one issue as it was last night, you had 4 people on one side of the House and the balance, 140 odd people on the other side of the House and it was the Parliament at its best working together to bring about an outcome that the people had demonstrated by their own will they wanted us to do. Do you ever think that the political process could achieve that, I mean has it surprised you, has it changed your perceptions of what politics can be like in Australia?

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Look, I think the more people engaged, yeah because I think we have all those systems of checks and balances and reviews and all that sort of stuff and processes to go through. It has made me feel more politically engaged I think in some ways and to see that, I think what people hunger for actually is more bipartisanship. People are really thrilled by that because then it's not about the politics of the backrooms, it's actually about the people getting together on an issue. Like I loved hearing, everyone thought a lot about what they were saying, some of the arguments were being rehashed that we'd already been through but I find that really quite exhilarating, actually that people are in there. And there's a lot of very smart people in this building who really, they have thought through ethical issues a lot and it's been a very interesting process but to see it tip like that, I thought it was going to tip over.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: It was like an avalanche in the end.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: It was wasn't it, it was amazing, but that thrill of people getting beyond their differences is always I think a very exciting thing for everyone.

RICHARD MARLES: Well Magda it was great to see what you did in this campaign. We're all looking at you and everyone in the gallery, you're all pretty stoic up there, as I understand it no food no mobile phones for hours on end in the gallery, have I got that right?

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: No toilet breaks.

RICHARD MARLES: No toilet breaks.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: No.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Like a hostage situation.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Yeah, totally hostage. And we're handing out tiny mints, like splitting them in half like a prison situation.

RICHARD MARLES: We did that too.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: There was no way any of us, we didn't want to be separated, we wanted to be together because we'd been through so much and we wanted to be – because it isn't just about me, there are so many people, Alex Greenwich, Janine Middleton, Tina Brady, Kerryn Phelps, Jackie Stringer, so many people who. Christine Forster, I was sitting next to her when her brother Tony's there arguing for the amendments, it was an extraordinary moment and there was no way any of us was going to miss a second of it, bladder or no bladder. It's like 'toughen up babe because if you don't we're here for the duration'.

RICHARD MARLES: Thank you very much for joining us today, and it's an absolute honour to be speaking to you today on the day after what has just been, really, one of the most exciting experiences I think all of us who have been in Parliament for some time have had and it's a great credit to you but it's really a wonderful day for the country and thanks for joining us.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI: Thank you, it's a goose bumpy day isn't it, it's a really amazing goose bumpy day.

RICHARD MARLES: So Christopher that brings us to not just the end of the show but the end of another year of politics and another year of Pyne & Marles and it's been a very big year indeed. There's been lots of toing and froing and that's really, we seen that shown in this last week of Parliament. Just before we go what are your plans for the break?

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: We like to head down to the beach Richard, so we'll be heading down to the beach just before Christmas and happily I'll get a good two to three week break down there. This is my only time of the year where I get to really relax, Caroline doesn't let me use the phone except first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening. And I'll do a little bit of surfing which will be terrifying for the locals but now that my children have given me a wetsuit of course it's much better for everybody concerned. Are you a beaching person too, I assume you are?

RICHARD MARLES: I am and Geelong is of course quite a beachy place, we're 20 minutes from the beach where we live so that's how I'm going to be spending my summer there and on the golf course. But it's been great talking with you again this week and this year Christopher. I look forward to joining you again next year and viewers we look forward to seeing you again in the New Year on Pyne & Marles on Sky News, we'll see you then, have a great Christmas.

[ENDS]