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## **Greek Orthodox Uni-student bullied while witnessing for marriage**

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



**On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Australians witnessed a new level of bullying from the Yes side at Sydney University. Most of us heard or read about this. However what many failed to discuss was the manner in which the No side witnessed to the truth about marriage.**



Amongst the No side students was one Greek Orthodox student, whose witness was truly inspiring. If all the clergy and faithful witnessed for Christian marriage with such calmness and inspiration today's public debate would have been in a better place.

This is what happened. Some young people who attend the University of Sydney witnessed how a clash occurred shortly after midday last Thursday near a free BBQ stall which was advertising "It's OK to say NO".

The stall had pitched camp around 10:00am and was offering pamphlets to passer-by's. There were lots of respectful discussions.

A crowd of Yes/Queer advocates then began to gather and surround the stall at around 12:30pm, slowly circling the group and forcing them into a corner. They brought a Megaphone, and used it to begin vile chants, spread abuse and threatening the group. Some of the protestors even came around on rainbow

coloured bikes like mounted cavalry, throwing condoms, glitter and knocking down tables. The protest intensified with more of their members joining in on the abuse, threats and assault. Their chants went on to include insults against the Christians, words which simply are too distressing to be repeated.

“I expected some counteraction to our stand but this was on another level, it was just awful” says Panayiotis the Greek Orthodox student. “I remember thinking as I held that banner, what would the first Christians have done, what would the Martyrs have done, how would the saints have answered; it was with this thought I gained the strength to continue to hold that banner for 4 hours, not wavering at the vile swearing, personal taunts and even physical altercations that came my way”.

As the protest evolved so did their comments; ‘you and your hatred are the reason gay kids kill themselves’, ‘you have blood on your hands’ and ‘put these bigots in the bin’.

Panayiotis recounts that “at one point I felt completely intimidated as a group of Queer supporters surrounded me, coming centimetres away from my face to spit in my face and scream, “homophobe, bigot”.

Who would have thought that simply saying “It’s okay to say no”, would condone such abuse, threats and violence? It seems the No side are not entitled to free speech.

One thing is certain, that the Yes side have over reached and same sex marriage is not even legislated. Even more concerning is that the Federal government is not intending to legislate for any protections for freedom of speech and religion in any proposed same sex marriage legislation. This leaves us with one option – one protection to vote no!