

NORPA Guide: Administering Oaths in Accordance with Protestant Tradition and Constitutional Standards

Issued by the National Oath Reform and Protestant Alliance (NORPA)

Respecting the Bill of Rights 1688, the King James Bible, and Australias Constitutional Liberty

1 Introduction

This guide outlines the principles for administering oaths in alignment with the Protestant tradition, the Bill of Rights 1688, and constitutional originalism, with specific application to Australias Constitution. It emphasizes the importance of using the King James Bible for oaths, upholding high moral standards, and ensuring the liberty of men and women as enshrined in foundational legal documents.

2 The Significance of Oaths

An oath is a solemn attestation by which an individual signifies their commitment to act truthfully and faithfully, invoking a higher deity. In the Protestant tradition, this act carries profound moral weight, as failing to honor an oath risks divine consequences. The use of the King James Bible, recognized as an accurate translation of the Word of God, is essential to ensure the oaths sanctity and alignment with Protestant values. Web:4

3 The King James Bible as the Standard for Oaths

The King James Bible (KJV), first published in 1611 and revised in 1769, is considered the preserved and living Word of God in English. Its use in oath-taking reflects the Protestant commitment to scriptural authority and moral integrity. Oaths taken on the KJV bind the individual to uphold truth and justice, consistent with the high moral standards of the Protestant tradition. Web:4

3.1 Why the King James Bible?

- **Historical Authority:** The KJV has been the standard English Bible for Protestant communities since the 17th century, shaping religious and legal practices.
- **Moral Foundation:** Its text underpins the ethical framework of oaths, ensuring that individuals are accountable to divine and moral law.
- **Cultural Relevance:** In English-speaking nations, including Australia, the KJV has historical significance in legal and ceremonial contexts.

4 The Bill of Rights 1688 and Protestant Tradition

The Bill of Rights 1688 is a foundational document of English constitutional law, enacted to protect the rights and liberties of subjects against arbitrary rule. It was a response to the actions of King James II, who sought to subvert the Protestant religion and the laws of the kingdom. The document enshrines principles such as the right to petition, freedom of parliamentary elections, and protections against excessive bail and cruel punishments, all of which align with Protestant values of justice and liberty. Web:1 Web:5

4.1 Key Provisions Relevant to Oaths

- **Right to Petition:** The Bill of Rights 1688 declares that subjects may petition the monarch without fear of prosecution, reinforcing the moral duty to speak truth. Web:5
- **Freedom from Arbitrary Power:** The document prohibits the suspension or dispensing of laws without parliamentary consent, ensuring that oaths are grounded in lawful authority.
- **Protestant Succession:** The Bill emphasizes the protection of the Protestant religion, which informs the moral context of oath-taking.

4.2 Oaths of Allegiance in 1688

The Bill of Rights 1688 introduced new oaths of allegiance to King William and Queen Mary, replacing earlier oaths to ensure loyalty to a Protestant monarchy. These oaths, taken by public officials, were designed to uphold the Protestant faith and the liberties of the kingdom. For example:

“I, A B, do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to their Majesties King William and Queen Mary. So help me God.” Web:5

This oath reflects the Protestant commitment to fidelity and truth, which NORPA advocates for in modern oath-taking practices.

5 Constitutional Originalism and Australia's Constitution

Constitutional originalism holds that a constitution should be interpreted according to the original intent and meaning at the time of its adoption. Australia's Constitution, enacted in 1901, draws on English legal traditions, including the Bill of Rights 1688, and reflects principles of liberty and limited government. Web:1

5.1 Application to Oaths

- **Liberty of Men and Women:** The Australian Constitution implicitly upholds the liberty of individuals, consistent with the Bill of Rights 1688, which protects against arbitrary governance. Oaths must reflect this commitment to individual freedom.
- **Protestant Influence:** The historical Protestant context of Australia's legal system supports the use of the King James Bible in oath-taking to maintain moral and constitutional integrity.
- **Original Intent:** Oaths taken by public officials in Australia, such as those under Schedule 1 of the Constitution, should align with the original intent of upholding justice and liberty, as informed by the Bill of Rights 1688.

6 NORPA's Recommendations for Oath-Taking

To ensure oaths align with Protestant tradition, constitutional originalism, and the liberty of men and women, NORPA recommends the following:

1. **Use of the King James Bible:** All oaths should be sworn on the KJV to maintain Protestant moral standards and historical continuity.
2. **Adherence to the Bill of Rights 1688:** Oaths must reflect the principles of liberty, justice, and protection against arbitrary power as outlined in the Bill.

3. **Moral Integrity:** Oath-takers must uphold high moral standards, consistent with Protestant values, to ensure truthfulness and fidelity.
4. **Constitutional Alignment:** Oaths should respect the original intent of Australia's Constitution, emphasizing the protection of individual liberties.
5. **Inclusive Practice:** While rooted in Protestant tradition, oaths should respect the equal liberty of men and women, ensuring no discrimination in their administration.

7 Conclusion

The administration of oaths is a sacred and constitutional act that upholds the moral and legal fabric of society. By grounding oaths in the King James Bible, adhering to the principles of the Bill of Rights 1688, and respecting constitutional originalism, NORPA seeks to ensure that oaths in Australia reflect the highest standards of Protestant morality and protect the liberties of all individuals. This guide serves as a call to action for public officials and citizens to honor these principles in all oath-taking ceremonies.

8 References

- Bill of Rights 1688, AustLII. https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol_act/bor16881wams2c2306/ Web:1
- Bill of Rights [1688], Legislation.gov.uk. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk> Web:5
- King James Bible Online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org> Web:4