

2 April 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

INQUIRY INTO THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY AMENDMENT BILL 2010

Dear Secretary

On behalf of the Ally Network at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia, please find our submission to the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill Inquiry 2010.

Curtin's Ally Program, launched by Vice-Chancellor Jeanette Hackett in 2006, aims to foster a University culture inclusive of sexual and gender diversity, in line with Curtin's equity policies and values. A Curtin Ally is someone (staff or student) who is informed about, is sensitive toward and understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) people and affirms the experiences and human rights of GLBTI people. Through training, an official Curtin Ally develops an understanding of the issues faced by people who identify as GLBTI. Curtin currently has over 130 staff and students who are Allies, spread across the various Faculties of the University.

Curtin upholds the principles of integrity, justice and equality of opportunity for all staff and students. For many Australians, including staff and students in the Curtin community, marriage can be a profoundly meaningful way to demonstrate love and commitment.

Providing same-sex couples with the same legal and social recognition of their relationships in no way infringes upon the rights of others. Allowing same-sex marriage is about extending the privileges already enjoyed by the majority to an excluded minority who differ simply in terms of the sex of the person with whom they are in a committed relationship. The lack of opportunity for same-sex couples to formalise their relationships, as do different-sex couples, sends the message that their relationships are not of equivalent standard and that they are second class citizens.

Allowing same-sex couples the right to marry is crucial to removing legal and social discrimination against gay and lesbian people and to recognise their equal citizenship and humanity. Marriage brings with it many practical legal and social benefits for same-sex couples and their families. Marriage equality will also strengthen the institution of marriage by allowing it to embrace those same-sex couples who want to uphold its values.

For these reasons, Curtin through its Ally Program wishes to register its support of equal marriage and encourages the Government to take a strong leadership position in this debate to extend marriage in Australia to same-sex couples.

Yours sincerely

Val Raubenheimer
Vice-President, Corporate Relations & Development