



KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS VICTORIA INC.

Friday 30th March 2012

The Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010,
Secretary, Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,
PO Box 6100,
Parliament House, Canberra. ACT 2600.

Dear Senators,

It is my pleasure to endorse the attached submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee regarding *Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010*, prepared by the Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria) Inc.

The KSC was inaugurated in 1922 as a national organisation of Catholic men dedicated to works of charity and social welfare within the community, and to the promotion of the Christian way of life in Australian society. Our activities include care for the aged, support for education and various charities, as well as activities that support local communities throughout metropolitan and rural areas.

Our interest in the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill stems from our concern to ensure Australian society is based on an effective marriage and family structure as its fundamental unit.

I commend this submission to your careful deliberations and am available should you wish to discuss it further.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Skehan
STATE CHAIRMAN
KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS VICTORIA

KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS VICTORIA INC.

Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee regarding *Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010*.

This submission is presented by the Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria) in strongly opposing the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010. If the Bill is passed, it would allow “same-sex marriages” in Australia.

We believe that that the Marriage Act 1961 and the amendments to the Act in 2004 protect the concept of marriage and family that has been proven to be the best means of achieving a stable, harmonious and balanced society. Therefore it is in the best interests of civil society and the common good that the current definition of marriage as “*the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life*” be preserved.

Marriage is an institution that has been recognised for thousands of years by almost every culture and civilization. Throughout human history the definition of marriage has generally been accepted as being the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.

The union of one man and one woman in marriage is an institution oriented to procreating and nurturing children, and this is what distinguishes it from all other relationships, including those offering exclusivity, dependence, longevity, commitment and sexuality. The fact that not all marriages are successful or result in children does not detract from the essential character and potential of the heterosexual relationship.

There are important practical reasons why society has valued marriage and family life highly, because:

- The continuity of any human society depends upon the process of procreation, which comes about through the sexual union of a man and a woman.
- Pro-creation of children contributes to the human “capital” of the nation.
- The assumed responsibility that the husband and wife accept for each other’s welfare as well as the welfare of their children.
- It is through family life that children develop their first understanding of their place in society, the important complementary differences that exist between males and females, and of the various roles that male and female members assume in the community.

Marriage defines the right of a man and a woman to marry, then have children in a manner that protects the inalienable right of the child to know his/her parents and be raised by them. Marriage protects the rights of the child to know their brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, grandparents, aunts, uncles and ancestors and their associated medical history.

Numerous studies have shown that in the vast majority of cases it is in the best interests of children to be raised by their biological mother and father. This leads to stable homes and has a rippling effect of leading to a more stable society.

Children need both their biological mother and father. Two homosexual men can be fathers, but they cannot be a mother and a father. Likewise, two lesbian women can be mothers but they cannot be a father and a mother. The State has a duty of care to protect the rights of children. The proposed change to the Act would leave the State deeply culpable to future generations

It is essential for the future harmony of our country that marriage and family life are promoted as the ideal and preferred environment in which children are allowed to develop a sense of their self-worth and gain their first understanding of their place in society.

Marriage is a public recognition by society of the unique sexual relationship between a man and a woman, as well as the responsibility they assume for each other's well being and that of their children. Recent trends in Australia such as the declining marriage rate, increasing divorce rate, increasing number of children in single parent families and children growing up without a father as a role model highlight how important it is at this time to protect the institutions of marriage and family. These trends in turn are important factors in increased crime, youth suicide, drug abuse and anti-social behaviour. In general it is better for all concerned – children, parents and the wider community – if the welfare needs of children can be met adequately by the biological (heterosexual) parents.

Any recognition of other types of relationship, such as homosexual unions, as being the equivalent of marriage between one man and one woman, will only result in a dilution in respect and understanding by members of society for the unique and vital role that heterosexual marriage plays in the development of children and providing human capital for the nation. Any perceived decrease in society for the importance of marriage and family life leads to a lesser likelihood of individuals being attracted to and participating in these institutions, which will be detrimental to both individuals and the country as a whole.

The main aims of the campaign for same-sex marriage by pro-homosexual lobby groups are to obtain symbolic approval and official recognition of homosexual lifestyles. However many homosexual couples have no intention of ever getting married as this is seen as too restrictive of their lifestyle.

The majority of Australians support the principle of marriage being between a man and a woman. Only a minority wish to jettison the marriage concepts that have supported our society since its beginning. To proceed with the proposed amendments would lead to a less stable society, diminished social cohesion and societal members without a family history.

In conclusion:

The concept of marriage is much more than an official recognition of a relationship between two people for its own sake. It also sets out clearly the responsibilities for the parties involved towards each other and for the careful nurturing of children resulting from that relationship. Marriage, as defined as the union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, has been highly valued and protected throughout the history of human civilisation for the great benefits it provides to the man, woman, their children and the wider community.

We therefore recommend that the Senate reject the *Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010* outright as the existing definition of marriage in the Marriage Act is the most appropriate for the needs of our society and does not require amendment.