

Submission

From

Salt Shakers

**Re The matter of a popular vote, in the form of a plebiscite or referendum,
on the matter of marriage in Australia**

Conducted by the
Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee

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Summary

Salt Shakers believes that marriage is between a man and a woman. This is the meaning of marriage, which comes from ‘matrimony’ – meaning the making of a mother – that emphasises the inherent nature of marriage being between a man and a woman. Whatever form of relationships two people of the same gender might have, it is not marriage.

As a Christian organisation we affirm that this is the position laid out by God in the Bible – that marriage is between a man and a woman – firstly in Genesis and then re-affirmed in [Matthew 19](#) by Jesus himself.

Thus we believe that the question of same-sex ‘marriage’ is not a question to be decided by the parliament OR the people. The meaning of ‘marriage’ cannot be changed.

In addition, we believe that if one adopts the principle of asking the people what they think on this important moral question, then it would inevitably lead to a range of other questions increasingly being put to the people ‘to decide’.

In our Westminster parliamentary system we elect politicians to represent us and to make decisions – even if we don’t like them, that’s the system we have. We don’t have the sort of majority rule by the people with coloured stones that was used by the Greeks and Romans.

Addressing the Terms of reference

That the following matter be referred to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 16 September 2015:

The matter of a popular vote, in the form of a plebiscite or referendum, on the matter of marriage in Australia, with particular reference to:

A Referendum or plebiscite

A **referendum** is unnecessary since the Commonwealth already has the power to make laws regarding marriage according to Section 51 of the Constitution.

The High Court affirmed that position in 2013 in their ruling on the proposed marriage law by the ACT government.

A plebiscite is non-binding and is in effect a huge and expensive opinion poll.

As to HOW the people vote in such a plebiscite, a lot depends on the nature of the campaign. Already we have seen that ANYONE who opposes the legalisation of homosexual 'marriage' is called a bigot and a homophobe.

a. an assessment of the content and implications of a question to be put to electors;

IF a question were to be put to the people it should **affirm the status quo** – such a question would read something like:

“Do you agree/believe that Australia’s Marriage Act should continue to define marriage as between ‘one man and one woman’?”

We do not believe that the question should PROPOSE the acceptance of same-sex marriage.

b. an examination of the resources required to enact such an activity, including the question of the contribution of Commonwealth funding to the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns;

The conduct of either a plebiscite or a referendum will be **extremely expensive** – a cost we believe is not warranted in the current economic climate.

Also of importance is that this is NOT an issue of high priority for many Australians.

The recent **GetUp** poll of their members placed 'marriage equality' **LAST of 16 issues** that members wanted the organisation to pursue.

The recent Sexton research also found that Australians rated this issue **VERY LOW** in their priorities.

In fact, it was reported, “The *Marriage Alliance* commissioned a Sexton survey last month which found **voters rated same-sex marriage at equal 13th when nominating important issues** the federal government should be focusing on.”

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/same-sex-marriage-voters-in-no-rush/story-fn59niix-1227477892963?sv=d93ae2cdf19765dc5fe37263564da547>

As to the financial contribution of the Commonwealth to the ‘Yes and No’ campaigns.

We understand that this is normally funded equally – however, of course, both sides will seek additional funding – so in effect there is never EQUAL funding and resources available to each side.

In the Irish referendum, wealthy American groups provided **huge funds** to the ‘Yes, we want same-sex ‘marriage’ campaign.

c. an assessment of the impact of the timing of such an activity, including the opportunity for it to coincide with a general election;

IF a public vote were to be held **we propose it should be held at the next federal election** – to minimise costs.

d. whether such an activity is an appropriate method to address matters of equality and human rights;

We believe both a referendum and a plebiscite are inappropriate and unnecessary.

Asking the people what they think in a plebiscite is hardly addressing ‘human rights’ – **it is just a measure of what each person ‘thinks’!**

A referendum is unnecessary – as the parliament already has the power to change the *Marriage Act* in whatever way they like – including same sex ‘marriage’ and even polygamy, according to the High Court!

e. the terms of the Marriage Equality Plebiscite Bill 2015 currently before the Senate; and

f. any other related matters.