



Australian Youth  
Affairs Coalition

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition

www.ayac.org.au

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

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

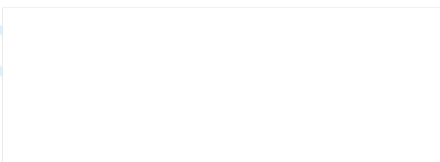
In relation to the proposed amendment to the *Marriage Act 1961*, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) seeks to acknowledge and highlight the overwhelmingly strong support young Australians have shown for marriage equality.

According to a recent survey more than 80% of young people believe that same-sex couples should have the same right to marriage that heterosexual couples enjoy<sup>1</sup>. Past surveys have also demonstrated this high level of support<sup>2</sup>.

AYAC would also like to highlight the high rates of discrimination LGBTIQ youth face in their communities, with 79% of queer students reporting that they have been verbally or physically assaulted due to their sexual orientation<sup>3</sup>. Such discrimination and harassment has significant damaging effects on young people's health and well being, and increases their likelihood of experiencing depression, anxiety and suicide. A move to marriage equality will help to reduce this.

AYAC urges the Government to support the proposed amendment to the *Marriage Act 1961*.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Cummings  
Executive Director

<sup>1</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 2012

<sup>1</sup> Galaxy Research 2010

<sup>1</sup> Hillier, L et al. 2010

*We acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to the elders both past and present.*