

15th of March , 2012

Dear Members of the House of Representatives,

We are ordained clergy at places of worship across Australia and we write seeking your endorsement of a motion currently before Parliament about same-sex marriage and religious freedom.

The motion, introduced by Andrew Wilkie MP, Member for Denison, reads as follows:

“That this House agrees that should the Marriage Act 1961 be amended to allow for the marriage of same-sex couples, any such amendment should ensure that the Act imposes no obligation on any church or religious minister to perform such a marriage.”

While the issue of same-sex marriage is supported by some churches and opposed by others, one area that all churches would agree on is that religious ministers should be under no obligation to perform same-sex marriages if it does not accord with the doctrines of their faith.

We note that this motion is also supported by advocates for marriage equality who are seeking to reassure concerned clergy and people of faith ahead of any debate or vote on a marriage equality bill.

We ask, therefore, that you respect this freedom of religion by voting to support Mr Wilkie's motion.

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Roger Munson, Uniting Church, Curtin ACT
Rev. Duncan McLeod, Presbytery Minister Canberra Uniting Church Presbytery
Pastor Jean Shannon, Uniting Church Hospital Chaplaincy Supervisor
Rev. Dr. Leigh R Neighbour, Pastor Metropolitan Community Church, Brisbane
Rev. Natasha Darke, Chaplain, St Peter's Girls' School, Kensington Gardens SA
Rev Dr Craig de Vos, Minister, North Adelaide Baptist Church
Rev. Fr Tim Mansfield, Apostolic Johannite Church, Sydney
Rev. Rex Graham, Uniting Church On The Mall, Wollongong,
Rev Ian Hunter, Uniting Church, Semaphore Uniting Church, Semaphore SA
Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky, Beit Shalom Progressive Synagogue, SA
Rev Greg Smith, Metropolitan Community Church, Sydney
Rev. Mike Hercocock, Surry Hills Baptist Church
Rev. Eileen Ray, Minister, Sandringham Uniting Church, VIC
Rev. Chris Bedding, Anglican Priest, Perth, WA
Rev. Drew Hanlon, Anglican Priest, Newcastle, NSW