

## **Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010**

I oppose the proposed amendments to the Marriage Act (1961) as proposed by the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010.

The proposed amendment which seeks to remove discriminatory references will in fact, introduce discrimination against the foundations of our society.

Our laws should be structured to protect the foundations of our society and protect and encourage those things that add benefit to society. Marriage as currently defined has a special place in our society, both in terms of continuation of our species, and, also in terms of creating a family context that provides the best environment within which our next generation can grow and develop to reach its full potential. Any broadening of the definition of marriage will weaken this foundation and erode its place in society. It will weaken and detract from our future.

Same sex marriage does not have this role in our society. Marriage defined for same sex relations is simply about recognising an agreement between two individuals. It differs little from any other common law contract. It is about protecting the interests of the parties to the arrangement and not about protecting future generations.

Reference to male and female in the Marriage Act is not discriminatory language, it is just plain English. The words are not of themselves in any way discriminatory. The Marriage Act in no way breaches existing anti-discrimination legislation so there is nothing that needs to be changed. To claim discrimination is simply an attempt by a concerted lobby group to change the definition of discrimination via a back door and to influence public opinion towards same sex relationships.

I have seen no documentation that lists current areas of actual discrimination and no statement of consequence that indicates the impact of redefining marriage in the current act. What of substance and benefit to society as a whole will flow by changing a definition in the act? It is a shoddy way of doing business to change the Act without clarity on the consequences.

If there are areas of active discrimination suffered by same sex couples because of the phrasing and application of other existing legislation, then, that legislation should be changed to remove or change the discriminating clauses. The rights of all dependants or partners should not be threatened by the laws of our land.

Any other discrimination claimed by same sex couples is quite notional revolving around whether claimed rights are translated to reality or not. We all suffer this type of discrimination. My right to work does not guarantee me a job. My right to an education does not guarantee me an education. My right to marriage does not guarantee that I will be married.

Within Australia and internationally there exists today real discrimination of extreme significance that represents great threat to our society:

- Our economic systems and financial controls are not adequate to meet the challenges of globalisation and the threat that comes from the greedy in this world.

- Australia faces an increasingly difficult future given our remoteness and the dryness of our continent.
- We are resource rich but have been unable to adequately convert that wealth into savings or investments to protect our future.
- There are more slaves today than at any other time in history. The lot of slaves is worse today than at any other time in history.
- Children in poverty are still dying at the rate of one child under 5 every 3 seconds. The challenge of poverty has not been dealt with.
- We are contaminating our environment and face an uncertain future because of global warming.

To the Senate I say "Shame on you". Shame on you for allowing a self-obsessed lobby group to grab your agenda and divert your attention from the more important issues of the day. Shame on you for entertaining contentious legislation which will consume your time and energy that should be directed elsewhere. Shame on you for allowing the claim of discrimination to blind you to the real discrimination that exists here and overseas.

A common law issue warrants only a simple common law answer.