



Consideration of Marriage Equality and Marriage Amendment Bills

The Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2012 and the Marriage Amendment Bill 2012 were referred to the Committee on 16 February and will be reviewed and reported on by the House of Representatives Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee.

Both bills seek to remove all discriminatory references in the *Marriage Act 1961* and amend the definition of marriage. The Marriage Amendment Bill 2012 seeks to repeal the definition of marriage and substitute the words “a man and a woman” with the words “two people”:

Marriage means the union of two people, regardless of their sex, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

The Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2012 goes further in redefining the definition of marriage with the following:

Marriage means the union of two people, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

In addition both bills call for section 88EA to be repealed. Section 88EA currently states that same-sex marriages solemnised in foreign countries must not be recognised as marriage in Australia.

The Chair of the House of Representatives Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee, Graham Perrett MP, said that “the Committee will hold a public hearing in Sydney in mid April to discuss the legal implications of the two bills. The Committee anticipates its report will be tabled on 18 June 2012.”

The Committee invites the public to have their say on the amendments being considered for the two marriage bills by participating in its online survey at www.aph.gov.au/marriage. This information will be provided to the Committee as part of the evidence for this inquiry.

For further information please visit the Committee website www.aph.gov.au/marriage

Please note the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee is receiving submissions into its inquiry into the Marriage Amendment Bill 2010 and is scheduled to table its report on 25 May 2012. For more information on the Senate Committee inquiry visit: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/marriage_equality_2012/index.htm

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Graham Perrett MP, on (07) 3344 2622 or 0408 883 312.

For background information, please contact the **Secretariat of the Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs**:

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