

Roger McWhinney

21 July 2008.

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sirs,

In relation to the above Bill, I wish to submit the following matters for your consideration.

Firstly, I believe that such law, if the Bill is given that force, will diminish the importance of marriage as a vital building block of our hitherto stable society. Successful societies throughout all time have esteemed marriage and exalted it above other forms of union. These societies both in the past and the present have recognised that marriage as distinct from other casual or even committed relationships requires a life-time commitment in a distinctive union of one man and one woman. This is best potential environment into which children can be born and raised. Marriage significantly and distinctively benefits society. It is thus a very dangerous step that is being proposed in this Bill.

Secondly, same-sex relationships are not marriages even given the proposed changes to the law. To give such relationships equal status with marriage diminishes the value of marriage. To undermine marriage in order to give such benefits is a wrong that must not be perpetrated by legislation.

Thirdly, the protections afforded to marriages are time-honoured and a privilege that recognises the value of marriage, per se. Other societies, which have given rights to non-marriage relationships, have discovered that that marriage has become irrelevant and ignored. There is also the potential for abuse of the privilege, if it is extended to such relationships. It may reach the stage that anyone who claims to be in any sort of relationship with anyone else will claim this privilege and thus frustrate the law requiring persons to give evidence.

Yours faithfully,

Roger McWhinney.