

Margaret Baguley

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Re: The Evidence Amendment Bill 2008

As the Senior Minister of a church, and a citizen of this privileged land of Australia, I am writing regarding the above bill as I am very concerned that this is not in the best interests of our society.

Marriage by law in Australia, is “the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.” This unique institution of marriage provides the best environment for raising children and this has been established by a large body of social science research.¹ Fathers and mothers make a difference in the upbringing of children and both are needed because of the different contributions that they bring to the nurture of a child.²

Marriage is a solemn contract or covenant relationship, between a man and a woman, that is not entered into lightly, but with much thought and the resulting relationship, benefits both men and women and its society.³

Same-sex relationships are not equal to marriage of a man and a woman. They are not capable of producing children without a third biological parent. Then that biological parent is intentionally deprived of a relationship with that father or mother.

Studies have shown that there are significant detrimental outcomes from homosexual parenting.⁴ Other studies have shown that it may be harmful.⁵

¹ Barbara Schneider, Allison Atteberry, and Ann Owens, *Family Matters: Family Structure and Child Outcomes* (Birmingham: Alabama Policy Institute, June 2005)

² W Bradford Wilcox, “Reconcilable Differences: What Social Sciences Show About the Complementarity of the Sexes & Parenting” in *Touchstone*, Vol 18, Issue 9.

³ *Why Marriage Matters, Second Edition: Twenty-Six Conclusions from the Social Sciences*, Centre for marriage and Families, Institute for American Values (New York), September, 2005

David de Vaus, “marriage and Mental Health” in *Family Matters*, No 62, winter 2002, pp27-32.

⁴ Sarantakos, S, “Children in three contexts”, *Children Australia*, 1996, Vol 21, No 3.

⁵ Wardle, Lyn D, 1997, “The Potential Impact of Homosexual Parenting on Children”, *University of Illinois Law Review*, Vol 1997, Issue 3, p833.

To allow same-sex couples, to register their relationships seems a farce in that they are being granted the benefits of marriage by mimicking marriage, but not the responsibility. It is common knowledge that homosexual relationships last on average about 1.5 years and gay men usually have other partners outside of the primary relationship.

To give same-sex couples or other unmarried couples access to the property and maintenance provisions currently available for married couples who divorce would result in a huge increase of cases being presented in the Family Court because of the instability of such relationships.

An acceptance of such relationships, devalues marriage as it now stands between a man and a woman, and it makes way for an acceptance of alternative lifestyles that are not in the best interests of children or of society as a whole.

Since marriage is a committed, lifelong union of a man and a woman, spouses should be protected from being forced to give evidence against each other. This should not be the case for defacto or homosexual relationships, which are of a much more temporary and non-binding nature. Criminals could exploit such a law by claiming that witnesses against them were in a de facto or same-sex relationship with them, to avoid a criminal associate giving evidence.

Thanking you for considering my concerns regarding this bill as you conduct your enquiry.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Baguley