

Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009

We oppose changes to the existing legislation regarding marriage

We fully support the position taken by the Australian Family Association.

Details can be found at:

http://www.family.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=240&Itemid=91

As stated by the Australian Family Association, *“around 8 million Australians are currently married, abruptly changing the status quo would certainly be a risky political stunt with no benefit for society”*.

Regards

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Marriage Q and A

The push for same-sex “marriage”

Arguments against same-sex “marriage”

The marriage debate is not really about “equality”

Although men and woman are equal, it would be absurd to say that equality means men have the right to be mothers. Motherhood simply describes a relationship between a woman and her child. We can call men “mothers”, but to do so would be confusing, and would render the notion of motherhood meaningless. It would be necessary to find a new word to describe the unique relationship between a woman and her child.

So it is with marriage.

Marriage simply describes a particular relationship with unique characteristics: the relationship between a man and a woman who

promise to remain in that relationship until one of them dies. From society's point of view, the chief purpose of the lifelong marriage relationship is to create the best possible environment to progenerate and raise children. Outside of that function, it doesn't really make sense for two people to publicly promise to stay together for life.

Progenerating children always requires a male and a female. That is a matter of genetic reality. And when a man and a woman have children, they each become irreversibly bound to those children by a genetic bond. Few Australians would doubt the profound significance of the genetic family bond. We see it in children who have been removed from their families: a deep yearning to know their genetic identity.

Marriage is the first step in the establishment of the genetic bonds of family. Through marriage, society deems a family relationship to exist between a previously unrelated man and woman. The lifelong promise of marriage lays the foundation for the inseverable genetic bond which each spouse has with their children, and which thereby establishes a family unit.

This kind of relationship is fundamentally unique, and so we give it a unique name: marriage. We can, if we wish, call other relationships "marriage", but this does not make those relationships the same as marriage.

Calling same-sex relationships "marriage" would make as much sense as calling men "mothers" or women "fathers". It is a recipe for confusion, and a denial of reality.

Why do governments even care about personal relationships?

Usually, governments have no business interfering in personal relationships. But there are exceptions. Where relationships involve children, the state has a responsibility to protect the well-being and interests of those children. Also, some relationships may be beneficial to society, leading governments to encourage those kinds of relationships.

So why does the state recognise (and fortify) marriage?

Because marriage, as a lifelong commitment between a man and a

woman, is the starting point for families, and the best place for children to grow up. Research shows that an intact, stable home-life with their natural parents is an excellent indicator for a child's future well-being: lower crime rates, better physical and psychological health, etc. The flow-on effects for society are obvious.

Although marriage is beneficial to society, we know that marriage isn't easy. That's why it makes sense for the state to encourage and protect marriage, by offering benefits to married couples and families. It's a kind of quid-pro-quo: by encouraging and supporting marriage, society gets the benefits of strong families and communities.

But many children grow up without their natural parents...

This may be true, but we all agree that, wherever possible, children deserve to be raised by their own biological mum and dad. And we all agree it's wrong to take kids away from their natural parents unless it's a matter of safety. That's why we're so ashamed of a government policy that stole aboriginal children from their families, and why we're so shocked and outraged by baby-mix-ups in maternity wards. Strengthening and protecting marriage makes sure as many kids as possible get the best possible start in life.

Why not homosexual "marriage"?

If marriage is meant to encourage stable families where children are being raised by their natural parents, then same-sex "marriage" just doesn't make sense. It is impossible for a same-sex couple to be the natural parents of the children they are raising. Every child raised by a same-sex couple is a child not being raised by one or both of his or her natural parents. If this is the result of a deliberate choice by the parents, then it's a choice which is manifestly unfair and unjust to the child.

In this way, same-sex relationships do not have the same beneficial effect on society. They are matters of personal choice. There is no reason for the state to formalise such relationships.

That's why we need to protect marriage.