

Parliament of Australia

SENATE

Senate Committee Inquiry

Marriage Equality Amendment Act 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to speak to the proposed *Marriage Equality Amendment Act 2009*.

From its very inception in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has supported human rights. Inspired by biblical values, they claimed the right of every person to choose beliefs according to conscience and to practice and teach his or her religion in full freedom, without discrimination, always respecting the equal rights of others.

Seventh-day Adventists affirm the dignity and worth of the human person created in the image of God, and promotes the values of family life, healthful living, education, and religious freedom within the boundaries as expressed in Scripture. It holds these values and truths as sacred and God-designed.

The Church believes that any marriage is to be guided by the following beliefs:

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church holds strongly to the belief that marriage was divinely established and affirmed by Jesus Christ to be both monogamous and heterosexual, a lifelong union of loving companionship between a man and a woman. God fashioned humankind as male and female in His own image; and He instituted marriage, a covenant-based union of the two genders physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
2. Throughout Scripture the heterosexual union in marriage is elevated as a symbol of the bond between God and humanity. It is a human witness to God's self-giving love and covenant with His people.
3. The harmonious affiliation of a man and a woman in marriage provides a microcosm of social unity that is time-honoured as a core ingredient of stable societies.
4. It is to a husband and wife whose love has enabled them to know each other in a deep sexual bond that a child may be entrusted. The growing child thrives in the atmosphere of married love and unity in which he or she was conceived and has the benefit of a relationship with each of the natural parents.

We firmly believe that the monogamous union in marriage of a man and a woman is

affirmed as the divinely ordained foundation of the family and social life and the only morally appropriate locus of intimate sexual expression. To this biblical view of marriage the Seventh-day Adventist Church adheres without reservation, believing that any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of God's ideal. The Australian society has been built on these Judeo-Christian values and any deviation puts at risk the rich and meaningful fabric of our cultural heritage.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church would therefore wish to maintain the current definitions of marriage as outlined in the Marriage Act 1961, and to keep intact all references to marriage being between "a man and a woman," and "a husband and wife."

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trafford A Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Trafford A Fischer

Trafford A Fischer MA

Director of Family Ministries

Director of the Adventist Institute of Family Relations

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