

To:

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Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
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28 August 2009

Submission on the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Children's Rights Council of Australia opposes the Marriage Equality Bill 2009 because it would completely change the meaning marriage has had throughout history. Marriage is vital for raising children, who need both a mum and a dad. Marriage is afforded a special status and special benefits and protection in society because it protects the rights of children to their biological mother and father and natural family. It has always been well understood that marriage and the natural family provide the nurture and protection that children need to flourish. No other institution, no other family form, not even adoption, could ever equal the rich benefits afforded children by their natural parents.

The Children's Rights Council calls for the Government to resist attempts to expand marriage beyond its traditional and cultural expression of being reserved for a man and a woman for the formation of the natural family. The legal definition of marriage should support our long-held cultural norms and traditions. Marriage must remain defined as being between a man and a woman. There should not be marriage for same sex couples. This would radically change the meaning of marriage and do untold harm to multicultural Australia. Most cultures represented in Australia are underpinned by a strong respect for traditional marriage. Overseas same-sex marriage should not be recognised in Australia.

The institution of marriage is so well understood and ingrained across cultures and tradition that even the call for this inquiry is clearly an attempt at advocacy to elevate the rights of a minority group of same-sex partners over and above the rights of children. It also demonstrates an unhealthy lack of respect for the role of mother and role of father by suggesting that other family forms could be equal to the natural family unit when the world wide experience is that they are not equal and not the same. The initiation of this inquiry to privilege a small and vocal group wanting to change marriage for all of us is a scandal, and an attempt to create a controversy (where none exists), as a pretext to overturn the accepted understanding and tradition of heterosexual marriage. This advocacy and contrived attempt to change marriage for all Australians present and future, through the vehicle of an official

Senate Inquiry, does in itself, do harm to marriage and the natural family. In fact, the very initiation of an inquiry into marriage seeks to scandalise traditional heterosexual marriage. It also scandalises the Senate which is then seen to be a hot bed of radical reform against the rights of children and the traditional family.

The Children's Rights Council strongly opposes the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009. We oppose this inquiry too on the grounds that it gives weight to those who would want to overturn or modify the long held support for the natural family and natural parents as codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We include as an attachment to our submission, an earlier submission we made to the NSW Inquiry into Adoption by Same Sex Couples (2009). In this submission we discuss further the issues relating to marriage and why Government and society should preserve the traditional understanding and definition of marriage.

Yours faithfully,

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Encl. Submission on the NSW INQUIRY INTO ADOPTION BY SAME SEX COUPLES (2009)

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