

To the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and
Constitutional Affairs
The Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009

From the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC
FAMILIES (Australia)

The essence of this life, the essence of the family is the marital covenant between man and woman, considered as the first basic expression of man's social nature.

The family, the "Civilization of Love" is older than any law, and stands outside the state.

Marriage has existed in every culture throughout history. It is the fundamental source of greater stability in every culture and society; commitment to stable marriage and parenting has always been regarded as a priority in social policy.

Marriage, as a public act, provides the best environment for the growing child. Many studies in the area of social sciences have proved this. When functioning as the "cell" of society, it delivers all that is good, precious and necessary to life as human beings. Through the 'conjugal act' it is the source of new biological life, springing up within the matrix of responsible love and care, but also in a spirit of duty, honour, obligation, mutual aid and protection. Marriage confers enormous benefits to society -socially, culturally and materially, within the framework of order, structure, responsibility and its contribution to the "common good".

Therefore marriage and family life, when properly structured and protected, allows us to have both economic growth and social stability, both efficiency and charity, both competition and compassion, both wealth and altruism. In view of its productivity and contribution to social infrastructure, it deserves a unique level of legislative protection and social /material support.

To equate marriage as we know it with other kinds of 'glamorized' liaisons is an affront to its true dignity. It trivializes the utmost importance of marriage and family life, and it undervalues the voluntary contribution made to Australian society by ordinary hardworking heterosexual couples raising children. Homosexual and lesbian couples themselves admit that their own perception of "marriage" differs from the normal heterosexual understanding, with the willingness to allow "extra-marital" sexual outlets. On what basis should the law dignify such liaisons?

The real aim of campaigning for same sex marriage is the symbolic approval and social recognition of their chosen lifestyle -which constitutes a very small minority of Australia's population! Of that small minority, an even smaller number of homosexual and lesbian couples actively desire and campaign for the lawful marital state.

Should we abolish the idea and true meaning of marriage for the Australian heterosexual majority? Trivializing the importance of marriage will make it more difficult for struggling couples to remain committed "in good times and in bad...sickness and health."

If passed, the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill would radically change what marriage means in Australia. From early childhood, 'man' and 'woman' would lose that sense of purpose and identity- stamped indelibly on their nature, that basic expression of his /her social calling. The natural result may well be the impoverishment of married and family life and the tragic consequences for children born into the family, with enormous economic and social cost to society.

We urge you to retain the dignity of marriage as between a man and a woman - a superior, essential, unique, authentic union and the only acceptable social order in the Australian culture. Any legislation not supportive of this reality denies the innately social and familial nature of the human person.

This is of crucial importance to the future of society in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Clare Meney

President (Sydney)

On behalf of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CATHOLIC FAMILIES (Aust)

The National Association of Catholic Families is an international organisation comprising of many 'ordinary' families living out their calling to provide spiritual, moral and social support to all families, and to promote the family as the most precious and important resource available to the culture and society. Catholics comprise aprox. 26% of the Australian population.