

Please find my submission regarding the proposed Amendment Bill:

Marriage Equality Amendment Act 2009 **No. , 2009**

I object to the proposed changes and request that the current Marriage Act be upheld as it stands.

The proposed changes are not required to meet the objectives as stated in the Bill. The stated objectives are separate and distinct from the union of Marriage. These objectives (with my comments) are:

(a) to remove from the *Marriage Act 1961* discrimination against people on the basis of their sex, sexuality or gender identity

Marriage is defined and commonly understood to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman. This is not discrimination against any person at all. Any adult may enter in the union of marriage. They are not prevented from doing so. Adults are correspondingly not prevented from entering into other forms of unions such as same-sex unions. An adult is not discriminated against whether they choose to enter into the Marriage Act or not.

(b) to recognise that freedom of sexuality and gender identity are fundamental human rights

We do not need to change the definition of Marriage to "*recognise that freedom of sexuality and gender identity are fundamental human rights*". Australia already recognises these rights. People who do not conform to the Marriage Act are in no way hindered or prevented from following their desires or pursuing happiness in the best manner that they see fit. Australians are free to pursue the any form of sexuality or gender identity that they may wish. The current Marriage Act does not hinder these right.

(c) to promote acceptance and the celebration of diversity.

By making the proposed changes, we are not promoting acceptance of the large majority of Australians who are currently married under the specified union of a *man and woman*. The proposed changes also cause a loss of diversity, by removing the specific definition of *a union between a man and woman*. We can promote acceptance and celebrate diversity by recognising that people are free not to be joined under the union of marriage. They may be joined under some other union. That is celebrating diversity.

In Conclusion

Having specific definitions is not discrimination. Discrimination is when a person is mistreated in some way because they do not meet a particular set of criteria. The Marriage Act does not discriminate against people. The Marriage Act is a specific definition and a traditional union that may be voluntarily entered into.

Please reject this Bill and uphold the current Marriage Act as it stands

Jonathan Waugh