

Mr Samuel John Boland

Sir/Madam,

I write to express my support for marriage to remain defined as ‘the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.’

I say this not to discriminate or to make life more difficult for certain parties, but rather in concern for our society in general, and particular groups specifically.

I want to say that I do recognize relationships between persons of the same sex, though I myself think this unwise. I tolerate the difference of opinion from person to person and seek for these relationships to be recognized in order to remove discrimination, but only so far as other parties are not conversely affected, that is to recognize them as a relationship, but not a marital union.

I am open to the governmental registration and recognition of relationships between two people irrespective of gender, however, I oppose the labeling of this as marriage and I oppose certain permissions for these relationships.

My biggest concern is for children. I believe, and studies have demonstrated evidence to agree, that for best development, a child needs the support and love of a mother and a father. We all recognize the detrimental effects of divorce on children, not only due to logistical difficulties, but due to the importance of both mother and father figures, preferably biological parents, to the healthy development of a child. We rarely extend this, however, to realize the effect of not having a parent of each gender.

I recognize the argument of partners playing the role of father and mother, and believe this to be critically flawed. Men and women are, at the very least, undeniably physically different. I believe men and women are also emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually different. I do not suggest one or the other gender is superior or inferior in any area, but rather that both are important for the healthy development of a child.

My concerns extend, however, to the wider community. The family, being based around the marriage of a man and women, is the mainstay of the continued development of our country. It is the means via which new Australians are conceived, raised, and from which they find grounding throughout life. It is through family that children are taught values and ideals which lead to the development of individuals who are passionate about working towards the development of this country.

I recognize that marriages being between a man and woman can also be flawed. I recognize the issues of abuse, of divorce, and of abandonment. Would these be any less

prevalent if the definition of marriage were altered to include same sex couples? I suggest that it would not. An ideal being flawed by the failed efforts of individuals should not deter us from aiming for the ideal which is the best option available.

In short, I am opposed to the redefinition of marriage to not specify the sex of participants due to the connotations this has with the beginning of a new family, which requires members of both sexes to operate. I am open to the governmental recognition of relationships between two people of the same sex, but oppose this being considered a marriage, in the sense that family rights are granted. I am open to the couple, being registered, to receiving benefits available to other, non-family (no children) couples.

Sam