

Dear Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Marriage Equality Bill before this committee. I am in support of homosexual unions being legally recognised on a national register for the purposes of such things as superannuation. I am however opposed to homosexual unions being considered as a marriage for reasons including:

The family – all children have a right to both a mother and a father. Children need to have contact with both their parents to provide a stable environment in which they can mature. A mother and father offer different contributions to a child's development which cannot be replaced by two parents of the same sex. It is certainly not in the best interests of the child to have written into marriage law, the basis on which a family is built, something which is less than they require for normal development.

The minority of couples seeking legitimacy of their relationship – the most recent ABS statistics show that in Australia, a very small number of de facto relationships are homosexual. In addition to this, in his second reading speech for the Marriage Amendment Bill 2004, Senator Greig (who spent 16 yrs in the gay and lesbian lobby) said many gay couples see marriage “as a bankrupt and failing heterosexual institution based on patriarchal principles”. The culmination of these two factors is that the number of couples who would actually want their relationship to be recognised as a marriage would be relatively low.

The other threats to the traditional definition of marriage – one argument for gay marriage is that the definition of marriage does not accurately represent the reality of all relationships in the community. In saying this, the other components of the definition of marriage are also under threat. For example, the concept of “for life” should be excluded because in reality 40% of marriages end in divorce. The main reason this has not be excluded from the definition is because it is fundamental to what marriage looks like. Marriage is to be seen as for life. It is not always a representation of reality but an ideal. If this part of marriage eroded, then it fails to be marriage. The same is true of other concepts such as “to the exclusion of all others”, “voluntarily entered into” and likewise “the union of a man and woman”.