

From: Peter Sharp

Date: Thursday, 20th August, 2009

Re: Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 - Submission

I wish to address the Amendment, with particular concern for an aspect of marriage which is not addressed directly, although they are the natural product of any normal marriage (as defined in the Act) - children.

I note firstly that Australia is, since 1990, a signatory to the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which has as one of its core principles "respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration"¹. Furthermore, Article #8 of the CRC acknowledges the duty of the State to preserve (and re-establish if necessary) a child's right to "his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations"².

Secondly, much research confirms that, of all observed family types, the traditional family (married mother and father with children) is easily the most stable in terms of health, wealth, well-being and longevity, and intact families provide the greatest overall benefit and least burden to society³.

Therefore I have just one question: How is it in the best interests of any child to formulate a sound, balanced concept of his or her identity, especially concerning gender, if they are not raised and nurtured by both a mother and a father? Surely the best interests of the child, which we are bound to uphold as signatories to the CRC, cannot be lightly dismissed as they would be if Amendment were passed. For equality in marriage for same-sex couples necessarily goes far beyond the "simple" marriage bond to encompass any children that might be adopted into that relationship, and one would be naive in the extreme to believe that is not part of the ultimate equation. To sign into law such an amendment will, I believe, sentence untold numbers of unnaturally acquired children (I say unnatural because children can only be the natural offspring of a man and woman as the Marriage Act correctly and sensibly acknowledges) to being severely handicapped in their struggle to understand their true identity. Our society can only suffer further as a result.

It is in the best interests of every child to be raised by both mother and father in marriage, both individually and for society, as the evidence supports. Therefore, I urge this inquiry to decline the Amendment under discussion and to vote in favour of the Marriage Act as it currently stands without change.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Sharp

¹ http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/children/index.html

² <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm#art8>

³ Archbishop George Pell, Quadrant March 2002, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-84430477.html>