

## **Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee**

Re: Inquiry into marriage equality

Marriage is a contract between two adult people who understand and agree to the terms of the contract (sometimes referred to as 'vows').

No longer does marriage in Australia need to have the religious overtones of past decades, and nor should it, unless those marrying wish it so.

We are a secular society and as a democracy the Senate inquiry should take heed of the Galaxy poll that found more than 60% of respondents support same sex marriage.

I am appalled at the recent ALP conference that resolved that marriage should remain as a union between a man and a woman. This is ignoring the facts of life – people live, love and die, and an individual's gender should not result in legal discrimination regarding *de jure* or *de facto* relationships.

At law, homosexual people need to have the same rights and responsibilities as heterosexual people. Any two people should be able to marry or live together in a de facto relationship regardless of gender or sexual orientation and their relationship should be legally recognised.

The Senate Committee should recommend that marriage in Australia no longer be defined as being only between a man and a woman, and overseas civil unions should be legally recognised in the same way that overseas marriages are recognised at law.

The Senate must make recommendations to change the current anachronistic laws, to recognise all Australians as equal before the law, regardless of their gender.