

Submission to the Senate enquiry on Marriage Equality

Marriage is defined by the Oxford dictionary as **1** the formal union of a man and a woman, by which they become husband and wife. **2** a combination of two or more elements. What I am asking you, as my representatives, is to broaden the meaning of the first definition to include people who wish to marry someone of the same sex, to formalise their relationship in the way which we, as a society, hold to have the most meaning.

You will receive many submissions discussing why marriage should remain between a man and a woman. As shown above, while there is a current definition for marriage it is not limited to being about the joining of a man and a woman to become husband and wife; marriage already means the bringing together of two or more elements to become one, with no definition of what these elements are.

Society has changed at an amazing pace in the last 50 years; in 1967 the thought of a white woman marrying a black man was considered inappropriate by her civil libertarian parents, and by their black maid (Guess Who's Coming to Dinner). These days any discussion about whether such a thing is suitable would be considered extremely inappropriate! Within our society it is only in the last 40 years that homosexual people have felt able to admit that they are attracted to the opposite sex, and even today they do so with fear of persecution by their peers. Young homosexual people are grossly overrepresented in the youth suicide statistics, I've known and heard of grown adults who have never told their family and friends that they are homosexual, and I can't imagine living with such a huge lie. Although more change is needed to make the life of homosexual people easier there is something simple we can do to achieve this. We can legislate to make same sex marriage legal. This "normalisation" of same sex relationships would help to bridge divides between heterosexual and homosexual people.

I would like you all to disregard any submissions made about the religious nature of marriage. I have no issues if religions choose not to allow homosexual people to marry within their church- that is their right. However marriage within Australia is a civil right and as such should be open to all.

I myself am not a proponent of marriage, but that is my choice. If I happen to change my mind at any time I can. I would like my choice to be available to all.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns

Naomi Brick