

To whom it may concern

Traditionally the institution of marriage is applicable to the union between a man and a woman who make a lifelong commitment to enter into such a union for the primary purpose of providing a secure and positive environment for children born from the union. Much research has shown that this is the best foundation for holistic development in life. Although often initiated by mutual attraction and a loving relationship between two people, it is the obvious physiological, biological and emotional design of the human race that has defined the relationship as marriage.

All Australians have the right to marriage. Many couples choose not pursue marriage because they are unwilling to commit to the constraints that a marriage relationship applies to the relationship such as lifelong faithfulness and responsibilities of raising children together. It is important to our nation that the marriage relationship is not devalued and defined only as private, personal loving based relationship between two individuals.

If the personal choice is to partner with a person of the same gender, then this lifestyle choice has determined the identity of this relationship. The suggested name for this relationship may be *de facto* such as the label given to unmarried heterosexual couples. There exists a minority group who would like this lifestyle choice to be affirmed by society and accepted as mainstream thus changing the original value of marriage.

In this instance, the real minority group affected by this are the children in these specific relationships who are not afforded the right to make personal choices about their alternative family situations. Sadly, once again mature individuals are given the right to abdicate the responsibility that negates or overrules the rights of those who those who should have been protected by said rights provided to responsible mature members of the human race. This hardly seems a quest for equality.

The vast majority of Australians support and see marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman. By this submission, I therefore urge the elected members of our parliament to consider what the members of their constituency regard as important and make a decision that reflects this stance.

Yours sincerely

*Megan Bennetts*