
Secretary,
Legal & Constitutional Affairs Committee,

Dear Peter Hallihan,
Would you please pass on the following informal comments to the
Committee.

1.Senator Crossin asked whether SCOA knew of any cases of "other interdependent relationships" who were adversely affected by the existing Comsuper laws and how many such cases did SCOA think there might be.

You may get help on this from the Dept. of Admin and Finance who received an actuarial report from Mercer Consulting on 9/7/04 , updated 2006, estimating the costs of extending reversionary benefits to "dependents". Senator Minchin told the Senate Estimates Committee in May 2007, that the cost was split 50/50 between same-sex couples and " other interdependent couples". The DoFA officers who discussed the Mercer Report at Senate Estimates were Ms.Campbell and Ms.Doran

2.Senator Barnett asked me what was the difference between same-sex relationships and interdependent relationships

I replied that the essential difference was that same-sex relationships were sexual relationships, whereas other interdependent relationships were asexual, and I added that contrary to what Mrs.Danna Vale had said in the second reading debate, what marital relationships, de facto heterosexual relationships and de facto homosexual relationships had in common was that they were all about "having sex".

I just want to add that I wasn't crudely referring to just the physical motions of having sex, but to sex, and other forms of bodily intimacy, as symbolically expressing the commitment between two people to a shared life.This is the same inner core which these 3 forms of relationship have in common, and therefore it is logical and reasonable to group them together as "couple relationships". What distinguishes marital relationships and de facto relationships is the different ways in which the relationships come into existence- marriage at a public ceremony, de facto after a deeming period - and the status which the state (and the church) accords to them . These are external factors, which can be differ from society to society.

It appears that the Archbishop of Canterbury,as a theologian, agrees with this analysis, as Senators may have read in "The Australian" on Friday August 8th. p.11 - I'll send the cutting in case Senators missed it.Please add it to the other cuttings I attached to the hard copy of my submission.

Thank you again for the friendly and thoughtful discussion. Please forward this e-mail to other committee members.
John Challis.
Comsuper Action Committee.