

Submission by:

Helen Louden

To:

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

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Dear Committee Members,

Re: Inquiry into the Same-Sex Relationship (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws – Superannuation) Bill 2008

I am concerned that the proposed changes to the above bill undermine marriage by removing all reference to marriage, spouse, husband and wife.

While I do not disagree with the intent of the bill (eliminating discrimination against same-sex couples and the children of same-sex relationships in Commonwealth legislation that provide for reversionary superannuation benefits upon the death of a scheme member, and in related taxation treatment of superannuation benefits), I am concerned at the method chosen to achieve this.

In 2004, the Marriage Act was amended to affirm that marriage was a lifelong, exclusive and voluntary union of a man and a woman. This distinctive should remain in tact in the superannuation bill. Unlike marriage, other relationships express far less commitment and do not have the same stability and hence benefit to children and society. Therefore marriage should not be grouped together with same-sex relationships. Provisions for same-sex couples in the bill could be made under the new category of 'couple relationships' as an addition to marriage rather than instead of marriage, and 'spouse and partner' as an addition to 'spouse'.

I urge you to retain all references to marriage, spouse, husband and wife in the superannuation law and add the necessary references to same-sex couple relationships, thus acknowledging the importance of marriage in our society.

Yours sincerely

Helen Louden (Mrs)