

Dear Senators

I write out of concern at the evident intention to remove all references to marriage from the existing superannuation laws, and to create a new category of 'couple relationships' which would include married couples, de facto couples and same-sex couples. These changes imply that marriage is no different to other relationships which express far less commitment and offer less benefit to society and to children.

It is imperative that the uniqueness of marriage be preserved, and that marriage not be subsumed into a new category of 'couple relationships' under superannuation law, or any other law. Only four years ago, the Marriage Act was amended to affirm that marriage was a lifelong, exclusive and voluntary union between a man and a woman. It is important that this definition be maintained by treating marriage separately from other forms of relationship, and that the terms 'spouse', 'husband' and 'wife' be retained in the superannuation law.

If it is felt necessary to cover other relationships in superannuation law, this can be achieved by referring to 'marriage and couple relationships', and 'spouse and partner', thus preserving a sense of the uniqueness of marriage in the legislation. This is because marriage offers greater benefit to spouses and children than other forms of partnership which are, by definition, less committed and less stable.

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