

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Same-Sex Relationship (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws-Superannuation) Bill 2008

18th July 2008

Dear Senators,

I agree with the desire to treat superannuation conditions for certain non-marriage relationships in the same way as they are treated for marriage relationships, including but not limited to those of long-term same-sex relationships.

However, I urge the Senate **not** to equate marriage & non-marriage relationships. It is not the role of this bill to change the way we think of marriage, or what we define as marriage.

Instead the bill should limit itself to making the treatment of superannuation equal for different types of relationships, where the Senate deems this appropriate.

Thus I urge the Senate to not subsume marriage and spouses into any more general 'couples' or 'partners' categories, nor use language that implies this. Instead the bill should identify the different types of relationships that it refers to, such as referring to "marriage **and** couple relationships".

If marriage is regarded linguistically as just one of many equivalent relationships, this will undermine what has proven to be one of the mainstays of long-term legal commitment within which relationships and children find security and thrive.

The desire of this bill is to spread the benefits of superannuation to a wider set of relationships, but it should not in the process undermine the very relationship it was initially designed to support.

Yours sincerely,

James Poland