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23rd July, 2008

The Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and
Constitutional Affairs,
Department of the Senate,
PO Box 6100, Parliament House,
CANBERRA, ACT, 2600.

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Inclusion of Same Sex Couples in Superannuation Legislation.

I refer to a bill that your committee is currently reviewing. The bill is to provide equal treatment for same sex couples in accessing superannuation benefits.

I am not against same sex couples being able to share financial benefits with one another. I do, however, believe that this is already possible by specifying their chosen beneficiary to their superannuation fund and also in their wills. Why then is this amendment required? I am concerned that the method included in the bill, to achieve this aim, will undermine marriage in the process.

The bill will see all references to marriage, spouse, husband and wife removed from superannuation laws. A new category of "couple relationships" will be introduced which will include married couples, de facto couples and same sex couples.

De facto couples have been included in the definition of marriage in superannuation law previously. This new change will obliterate reference to marriage altogether. This wrongly implies that marriage is no different to other relationships which express far less commitment and do not achieve the same benefit to society and children.

Both major political parties announced, before the 2004 Federal Election, that they believed marriage to be between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others. What has changed? Will these changes, to delete marriage from superannuation laws, simply open the floodgates and allow changes to other laws once further changes to address alleged same sex discrimination are proposed?

I believe that this constant attempt to change laws to suit same sex participants is simply a back door method of gaining legal status for what I consider abhorrent. Those who seek these amendments already have the right to specify their same sex partner as the beneficiary to their superannuation and also through their last will and testament. There is therefore no discrimination.

The changes to the definition to delete and/or denigrate marriage are wrong. Marriage is the basis of a good society and this organisation is committed to training people, as counsellors and Family therapists, to help the many troubled families in society today.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. N. Bruce Litchfield,
President and Founder.