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

Dear Mr. Hallahan,

**RE: Inquiry into Same Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in  
Commonwealth Laws - General Reform) Bill 2008.**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary inquiry. Dr. Litchfield has asked me to respond on his behalf. This organisation, which has been founded by Dr. Litchfield and his wife, is committed to equipping people, from all walks of life, to assist the many troubled families and individuals in our society these days.

This organisation strongly opposes the bill for the following reasons:

1. This bill will see so many laws unnecessarily changed to remove all references to marriage, spouse, husband and wife from superannuation laws. The passage of this unnecessary legislation will mean a substantial cost to the taxpayer, a costly burden which I personally would resent.
2. This new category, by obliterating reference to marriage altogether, will wrongly imply that marriage is no different to other relationships, which express far less commitment and do not achieve the same benefit to society and children.
3. Governments should be encouraging marriage as an institution of firm long lasting commitment. TV programmes and governments tend to denigrate it and thus contribute to the increasing divorce rate, which causes so much devastation to all those involved, particularly the children
4. We believe that this bill, to ensure that same sex couples can share financial benefits with one another, is unnecessary. We believe that they already have the right to do so. They can specify their "partner" as the beneficiary of their superannuation and in their will. I have confirmed, with my own superannuation fund, that this is correct. The named beneficiary would be paid the funds except in the case where

- the holder of the superannuation was leaving money to a "partner" while neglecting a wife and possibly children.
5. 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?
  6. This allegation of discrimination is simply a ploy by those, who have chosen the same sex lifestyle, to change the opinions of people to believe that this lifestyle is natural. They do so in an effort to have it formalised legally (see the attempts of the ACT government).
  7. Christians and Muslims strongly believe that same sex unions are wrong. Other religions probably agree. Why then press on with this proposed change when so many disagree?
  8. Will Muslims and other sects which believe that polygamy is normal, if these laws are passed, be able to claim that, because same sex relationships are recognised, they should be able to have polygamy recognised? Apart from the Christian belief about this, just think of the impact on social security payments for the taxpayer. A man with many wives and all are eligible for benefits. This is already being pushed by Muslims in the United Kingdom.
  9. Who does think that same sex relationships are okay? These people would be in a minority but they are a vocal minority and governments seem to give them much more credence than they deserve.
  10. The new category of "Couples Relationships" will be a meaningless term encompassing all types of relationships. The new category will include married couples, de facto couples and same sex couples. One might wonder, could this be extended, in the courts, by becoming a legal precedent, to include people who "marry" their pets as appeared on a TV current affairs programme recently? A person could claim "Couples Relationship" with their pet.

The passage of this bill is strongly opposed by the Australian Institute of Family Counselling. We stand for supporting and building strong viable and lasting family units of man, woman and children and believe that this legislation is contrary to this stand.

Yours sincerely,  
R.J. (John) McPherson,  
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