

From Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia in NSW representing women in parishes throughout New South Wales. Unanimously approved at the March 22 monthly General Meeting of some 40 country and city elected representatives.

Submission to the Legal and Constitutional Committee of the Senate on the Marriage Equality Bill 2010

It is with great concern that our members view the fact that the Australian Government is considering allowing marriage to apply to both women couples and men couples and wish to appeal against this prospect.

We believe it is not the purpose of the state to confirm people's sexual preferences. All citizens are at present free in this country to live with whomever they choose and conduct their lives without interference. They already have full civil rights and social benefits. **There is no need for State Sanctioned Marriage.** Past attitudes to homosexuality were misguided, however the outcome of "legal marriage" will in time have huge personal and family consequences across the population in the same way as has approval for divorce.

Where children are concerned, it is better that they are conceived in a stable man/woman relationship as society has proven over millennia. It has been already established in statistical studies that children do best when raised by their own mother and father as a stable family. The proliferation of single sex families will not necessarily be a positive outcome for the children conceived by donor when they are adult. There is much evidence around adoption which has made it a very unpopular choice. These children will also need to know their donor parent when adult. Because this cannot be regulated, will this be possible?

If homosexuality is given this level of community acceptance, the young or uninformed will easily presume it is a legitimate way to enter into adult life. We have witnessed the altered community perceptions of marriage and popularity of "no fault" divorce over the past 30 years in the present difficulties of increasing numbers of children/adults in fragmented families and on Social Security.

As these donor families begin to grow in numbers - as they will, it follows that if the state makes this form of "marriage" legal, it will also have to provide divorce and mediation, child custody and conflict resolution in divorce disputes. These liaisons are just as volatile if not more so than traditional marriage. This is already on record though the numbers are as yet low. This will no doubt alter with apparent social acceptance.

We believe marriage should remain as presently described - "between a man and a woman excluding all others" - that is traditional marriage. They are the only ones to really qualify for this role. It has also proven the least expensive social security a community can have. It can also provide the best outcome for children as they mature.

We urge the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee to disapprove the Marriage Equality Bill 2010.

Mrs Janet Fuller, State Secretary PWA

Mrs Marion Smith AM
Social Issues Representative