



**This submission is on behalf of Rainbow Labor Tasmania.**

Rainbow Labor Tasmania calls on the Australian Government to remove discrimination from the *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth) (the Act).

The current legislation discriminates against gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and intersex (GLBTI) community members on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Rainbow Labor Tasmania is part of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and actively campaigns for and on behalf of the GLBTI community.

Rainbow Labor Tasmania was part of the successful campaign in 2011 to change the ALP platform to remove discrimination from the *Marriage Act*.

Of the 23 Tasmanian delegates to the 2011 ALP National conference, 19 voted in favour of the change. This demonstrates the overwhelming support within the Tasmanian ALP for changing the *Marriage Act* to provide for marriage equality.

The GLBTI community is asking for equality on this issue. Same-sex couples are asking to be treated the same as heterosexual couples under the law. To be recognised as part of the broader community, and to be treated equally within the broader community, legislative discrimination against the GLBTI community must end.

Experiences overseas have demonstrated that removing discrimination from marriage laws adds value to and significantly improves the institution of marriage, and creates a respectful view of family values.

Research has proven that children are in no way impeded by same-sex marriage. Marriage equality means that children whose parents are in same-sex unions will not suffer associate discrimination, as their parents will be treated equally with heterosexual parents, under the law. Marriage equality may go some way in ensuring that families where the parents are not heterosexual are not viewed as being any less valuable.

The current discrimination within the *Marriage Act* sends the wrong message to the community and is used to fuel discrimination and vilification against the GLBTI community.

Discrimination and vilification can lead to self harm, mental illness issues and isolation.

The proposed amendments to the *Marriage Act* seek to remove legislated discrimination. The proposed amendments would enable people to marry regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Rainbow Labor Tasmania strongly supports the amendments and believes that marriage equality would significantly contribute to Australia being an inclusive nation that respects human rights.

Yours sincerely

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Co Convenors