

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church

29th March, 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir,

RE: Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010 inquiry.

The Session of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church submits this argument on the behalf of the congregation to support maintaining marriage as it currently stands in Australia.

Marriage is a term to describe the exclusive, life long, legally binding relationship between a man and a woman. No matter how other relationships try to imitate marriage, whether by loving devotion to each other, or partnership or whatever, they cannot compare with marriage as it now stands – a joining of a man and a woman as one flesh. It is unique and so must be preserved.

Marriage must be maintained because it has the capacity to bring third parties into the relationship – children. No other relationship can affect third parties like this. The rights of the children to know their father and mother must be protected – to deny them this right will lead to another stolen generation; people whose identity and heritage have been taken from them because others thought they knew better.

For the sake of children, marriage must be held in highest respect. Children do best when raised by their biological father and mother. I had the benefit of this upbringing and it must remain the ideal in our country, even if it is not attained as well as we might wish.

For the sake of parents who raise children who grow to become well balanced, responsible adults, marriage must be maintained as it now stands. Our society owes a great debt of gratitude to the parents of the next generation of Australians. For their sakes, marriage must be held in high honour. To change to accommodate some notion of "equality" is to trash the respect due to them and treat as nothing what they have done for our society.

For the sake of the stability of our society, marriage must remain as currently defined. If other kinds of relationships are to be included, where are the boundaries as to what is included: 1 man + 1 man, 1 woman + 1 woman, 1 man + 2 women, 2 women + 1 man? For those who do not wish to enter into such relationships what kind of discrimination would they face? It would then be a very small step for those now clamouring for marriage "equality" to appeal against the churches because they refuse to conduct marriage solemnisation for same sex couples. The church in Australia would then face the persecution that our brothers face in many other parts of the world.

Please see that marriage continues to be defined as a unique union between one man and one woman. Other relationships can never equal the unique relationship that is marriage; to think they can be equal is simply irrational.

Yours faithfully

Rev Lyle Sims

(Minister)

Mr Garry Formann

(Elder)

Mr Alwyn McClenaghan

(Elder)

Mr Dougal Pottie

(Session Clerk)