

**To the Senate Committee;**

I am writing to the Senate Committee in relation to the private senator's bill which is designed to *"remove all discriminatory references from the Marriage Act 1961 to allow all people, regardless of sex, sexuality and gender identity, the opportunity to marry"*.

Firstly, I wish make the point that this bill goes far beyond it's [misleadingly] stated goal of removing discrimination, but actually seeks to fundamentally redefine the current language definition of marriage which has stood for thousands of years, spanning hundreds of cultures.

Should this proceed, this has profound implications for our future, our culture, our society and our collective spiritual health. This also impinges upon the rights of currently married people who understand that there is ample cultural, historical and religious justification for their belief that marriage is, by fundamental definition, exclusively heterosexual and that this definition is sacred and holy, founded on something far more substantial than prevailing opinions or social trends.

The Parliament may lack the moral sensibilities or the historical awareness to understand that this great democracy of ours, indeed this great western civilisation, rose to these heights of greatness by virtue of our Judeo/Christian heritage and our adherence to moral law, social order and justice based upon the biblical commandments; but they should be able to see that the current move to redefine marriage is being championed primarily by gay activists and their sympathisers, whose ultimate social agenda is to undermine our nation's Christian heritage and further erode the Christian values upon which our nation was founded.

The 'Marriage Equality Amendment Bill' perhaps embodies the sincere aspirations of some gay couples to pursue their personal happiness and to attain a sense of social legitimacy for their lifestyles – but this is also something that can never be achieved by an Act of Parliament. The lifestyle which they so desperately hope to legitimise is, by clear biblical definition, misguided, but nevertheless already adequately protected by current laws. And whilst the Senate Committee may give just credence to the rights of individuals to choose to form unions in a way that is free of discrimination, a redefinition of marriage is not needed to achieve this goal. This is just a misguided attempt to force, by an Act of Parliament, an enormous shift in culture and beliefs which can only ultimately lead to further social division - and ultimately bring additional discrimination against those of us who continue to hold to a traditional view of marriage.

It is an act of extreme arrogance to assume that anyone has the right to mess with the universal tradition of marriage that has stood for thousands of years. Furthermore there is an embedded hypocrisy in the amendment that needs to be highlighted: Whilst this amendment to the marriage Act claims to seek to remove discrimination in the Acton behalf of gay couples, it ignores ongoing discrimination in the Act towards other forms of marriage, such as polygamy, which by the way has much more historical, religious and cultural basis for tolerance than homosexual unions, yet continues to be illegal under Australian law.

If there is any amendment to the Act that is designed to remove discrimination, it must be fair and address all forms of discrimination equally and preserve the rights of all – not just the noisy activists.

In conclusion, the Marriage Equity Amendment Bill does not adequately address the issue of discrimination at all, nor does it adequately uphold the historical and universal definition of marriage.

**Allan Weatherall**