

We view with alarm the decision by the Parliament to proceed with this Bill; and by so doing to muddy the definition of gender to satisfy the demands of a small but vocal group of very confused people. The net result will be to add further confusion, rather than clarity, to other similarly disturbed people in the community; and which will lead to a further breakdown in an already fragile society.

Of course, we are fully aware that the intention of the Bill is ultimately to foist same-sex 'marriage' (SSM) on the public by stealth, despite the fact that two Bills in federal Parliament, and one Tasmania, have already been defeated convincingly over the past two years. It is patently obvious that the words 'sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status and marital or relationship status' in place of 'marital status' in the Objects clause of Section 3(b) identifies 'relationship status' with 'marital status'; contrary to the intention of the Marriage Act which recognises marriage as a contract between a man and a woman. This applies to the amendments to all Sections of the Act in which these phrases are used.

Gender identity is a vague term; no clear indication is provided as to what it is. How can people, considered to be in breach of the Act's provisions, be expected to know in advance that another person has a 'gender identity'. 'Gender Identity' is an artificial construct which, because of its fluidity, is capable of changing from moment to moment. A consequence of the use of such a term may be that a male, who considers himself to be a female, could gain access to women's toilets and change-room facilities, and that authorities would be powerless to stop him. The community needs to know exactly what gender a person possesses at all times.

The repeal of definitions of man, woman, spouse, etc, is tantamount to taking words which have specific, and long-standing, scientific and biological meanings and replacing them with terms which are, at best vague, and at worst will cause monumental confusion in the community.

Equating 'different sex' with 'opposite sex' is also inadequate. The word 'opposite' means only two, whereas 'different' means more than two; again creating an artificial construct in the use of language, leading to further confusion. Despite the perceptions of a minority of confused people, scientifically, the human race consists of two sexes only: male and female.

Given the problems facing the country at the present time, we are firmly of the opinion that the government and the Parliament would be acting in an irresponsible manner were they to proceed with this Bill.

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