



HUMANIST SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

(Reg. No. A0020272M)

Affiliated with the Council of Australian Humanist Societies (CAHS)
and the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), London, UK

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Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
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RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN MARRIAGES BILL 2014

The Humanist Society of Victoria (HSV) is a secular organisation whose members foster an ethical, rational and responsible approach to life. HSV supports human rights, democratic processes, and a just and inclusive governance.

HSV seeks to alleviate suffering, to promote well-being and the circumstances where all individuals can attain their full potential. It engages in educational and charitable activities.

The views that follow have been formulated at specially convened group discussions to which all HSV members are invited. Further supportive evidence has been obtained from print publications, the Internet, the mass media and from individuals with relevant experience.

The President, Vice-President and Submissions Conveners of the HSV are authorised to present these views.

8 June 2014.

Dear Secretary,

We congratulate the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on their initiative to establish this inquiry, and we thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Humanists uphold the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which places responsibilities upon governments to protect equality of human rights for all people.

Marriage is a fundamental human right, and same-sex marriage is becoming increasingly recognised and upheld in many nations including New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

As a responsible world citizen, our nation has a duty to recognise and respect the laws of those nations whose laws uphold universal human rights in the form of same-sex marriage.

Australia welcomes immigrants from many nations, yet it would be both ludicrous and discriminatory for Australia to refuse legal recognition for an increasing number of same-sex immigrant families who have been married overseas.

Humanists also assert that the recognition of same-sex marriages from other jurisdictions will serve an educative role for those Australians who currently fail to understand the universal nature of human rights which are upheld within Marriage Equality.

Members of the Humanist Society of Victoria support the rights of same-sex married couples to receive legal recognition within Australia as proposed by the *Recognition of Foreign Marriages Act 2014*. Victorian Humanists regard this Act as a long-overdue recognition of the basic human right to equality.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Allshorn
Co-Convenor
Submissions Committee
Humanist Society of Victoria.