apostolicchurchaustralia
national administration office
telephone +61 3 9466 7999
facsimile +61 3 9466 7988
email admin@apostolic.org.au
address 28/20 enterprise drive bundoora
victoria 3083 australia
web www.apostolic.org.au
ABN 24 004 350 798

22 December 2016

Committee Secretary
Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill
Department of Senate
PO Box 6100
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Sam-Sex Marriage) Bill

As the National Leader of the Apostolic Church Australia; a collection of 90+ churches nationally, consisting of approximately 12000 members, I am writing to express my concern at the current suggestion to change the definition of marriage and consequently, the religious freedom protections that are currently in place for ministers.

It is my understanding that there is currently a Senate inquiry into the consequences of same-sex marriage for religious freedom that is being examined and it is my hope that the views I express on behalf of all our ministers, and many others in a similar position, will be heard and considered as part of the findings you present.

If the current suggestion to redefine marriage is legislated, the ramifications for minsters of religion will be significant. The nature and effect of this proposal will impact not only ministers of religion, but also marriage celebrants, religious bodies and organisations also. The current freedoms we possess will be stifled and the consequences for religious freedom will be serious, as they have been for those overseas that have adopted similar suggestions. It is my opinion that ministers will have less freedom when it comes to acting as a minister should this suggestion be passed.

As ministers, the freedoms we currently possess, when it comes to religious beliefs with regard to male-female marriage will become difficult under state-based anti-discrimination law. These redefinitions will not only affect us in areas of marriage itself, but will also have an impact in areas on gender, family and sexuality.

Whatever the findings of this Senate inquiry, it is my hope that the current position regarding freedom of speech, association and religion are not only considered, but upheld by our government.

Kind regards,

Wayne Swift
National Leader