

31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Senate Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Honorable Senators of Australia,

This is my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010. I would urge the Inquiry to support the maintenance of the concept of marriage in the Laws of this country as identical to that which is stated in the Marriage Amendment Act of 2004 which defines marriage as “a union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life”.

A heterosexual relationship which eventually becomes a marriage, usually precisely because the couple intends to have children, is essentially different from a same sex relationship. The act of sexual union in the first case is both the expression of love and can be the cause of the conception of a human being who is the biological offspring of the two people who engage in the sexual union.

This makes homosexual relationships different. Homosexual unions are not reproductive.

One of the most common objections to this line of reasoning is to claim that homosexual unions are the same as the unions of married couples who are infertile. This is a red herring as it ignores the fact that infertile heterosexual couples are the exception, not the rule (7.4% amongst married women in the United States and it is acknowledged that the figure is as high as it is because of contributing lifestyle choices, such as having children later in life). Also, whether a heterosexual couple is infertile is often unknown before the couple is married or decides to have children. Without a third party intervening, homosexual couples are always infertile.

The biological ties binding parents and children are important for children.

This has been demonstrated by the growing movement of young people who were born by means of IVF technologies from sperm donor fathers, who are searching for their genetic fathers in order to better understand their own identity.

One of the biggest problems we are facing at the moment with the break-down of biological families is the detrimental effect it has on young people.

The breakdown of marriages has relevance to the issue of same sex marriage because it highlights the effects on children of not having a member of both sexes as their parents. The importance of a loving mother is almost taken for granted. However, it is well known in adolescent psychology that girls who are connected to their fathers are less likely to engage in risk taking behaviour such as binge drinking, drug abuse or sexual promiscuity. In addition, there are presently many adolescent psychologists

pointing out that boys and young men need their fathers in order to be able to understand what it is to be a responsible and loving male. The only reason we do not have the same amount of data on children growing up without a mother is that the situation is relatively rare.

Establishing the institution of same-sex marriage is to **deliberately create a situation** which says to some children **“You will not have a father”** or **“You will not have a mother”**. This is the photo negative of taking children away from their families, which resulted in the stolen generation of indigenous people.

In a 2010 study in the United States it has been shown that of the family types in which children are born and grow (married biological parents, other married parents, unmarried parents, single parents with partner, single parent with no partner and neither parent) maltreatment (that is, neglect and abuse) is lowest in families of married biological parents. See

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse\\_neglect/nati\\_incid/nis4\\_report\\_exec\\_summ\\_pdf\\_jan2010.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse_neglect/nati_incid/nis4_report_exec_summ_pdf_jan2010.pdf)

The institution of marriage defined as a union of one member of each sex is intrinsically connected both to the sexual union of the couple and to the most obvious and usual outcome of that sexual union - the reproduction of children. The biological bonds that result are the basis of an institution which is the safest and most nourishing environment in which a young person can flourish. It should not be fundamentally changed by ignoring the sexual differences of men and women.

I ask you to maintain the definition of marriage as it now stands.

Thank you for your attention,

Martin Fitzgerald