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Response to House of Representatives Inquiry into Amendment of the *Marriage Act 1961*

On my own behalf, on behalf of the Executive and members of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) of Australia, and on behalf of the many supporters of traditional marriage in Australia, I am writing to express the strong and united opposition to changing the definition of marriage.

Section 5 of the ***Marriage Act 1961*** defines marriage thus:

"marriage" means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

1. Marriage is a unique relationship between one man and one woman.

2. In every stable, life-affirming and developing society, at every moment throughout the history of mankind, marriage has been central to the stability of that society; to the formation of families; and to the nurturing of children from conception to birth and beyond.

3. In contemporary Australian society, and in all nations and across all continents, the best means of raising children – and so of fostering and developing the society – is in a stable family in which the child is raised by his or her biological mother and biological father united in marriage.

4. Such stability is reflected statistically through the reduced incidence of threats to the child (including threats of physical and sexual abuse from other adults in the home) and the reduced incidence of delinquency and substance abuse on the part of the child.

5. As a result, the family biological family is the most cost-effective unit for society, both financially (minimal cost of delinquent behaviour and of remedial interventions) and in terms of social cohesion (as opposed to family breakdown, the soulless destruction of alcohol, drug and substance abuse, and the emotional toll on individuals, their families, friends, workplaces – and all too often, their victims!).

6. Every heterosexual – and monogamous – marriage commences with the premise that children may be a product of the marriage. No homosexual arrangement may entertain such a premise: it is not possible for such a union to produce any child without the intervention of third parties or teams of artificial reproductive technologists.

6. A generation ago Prime Minister Bob Hawke promised that in less than a decade no child would live in poverty. As a society, we owe it to each and every child to provide him or her with the best start in life we can: every child deserves the chance to be nurtured in the loving care of both biological parents.

7. Man and woman are complementary – physically, emotionally, socially. Each truly complements the other in a way that is totally impossible for two women or two men.

8. In his or her own family, each son learns what it is to be a father, and each daughter learns what a father offers. Each daughter learns what it is to be a mother, and each son learns what a mother offers. Each is taught his or her own responsibilities and rights, and what each may expect from their complementary spouse in future.

9. International treaties and covenants uphold marriage as the union of man and woman. The European Convention on Human Rights protects only marriage between a man and a woman. And, in the 1978 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the only marriage contemplated is between a man and a woman. Article 12 of the European Convention states that: *"Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family"*, an article that remains current in 41 of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe.

10. Further, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child states that *"the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community"*.

11. Same-sex "marriage" is simply a misnomer. One may not take a deck of cards and claim to play football, or cover oneself with feathers and expect to fly! Homosexual "marriage" is an assault on traditional marriage: its claim to validity is no more than cut flowers: all for show, lasting all too briefly and unable to produce the next generation.

12. That assault on marriage thrusts forward a facade which purports to present an exciting "new family model", but which is unable to produce any fruits of that "shining new model". No mushrooms, but toadstools: the child constrained by having "two mothers" or "two fathers" (each an impossibility) is like taking a keen young netballer and placing her in callipers, or trying to run a diesel engine on petrol!

13. As with societies across the globe, marriage – the institution and the covenant – is deeply embedded in Australian society. It is embedded within the many cultures which came to this land – and, indeed, within this nation's indigenous culture(s).

14. For many, that culture merges with a religious perspective: there are religious connotations to marriage, religious rites of marriage, and rights and responsibilities exclusive to those who entered into marriage.

15. Any attempt to redefine marriage cannot but devalue marriage itself. Mock cream was meant to replace whipped cream (and portrayed as a suitable replacement for the real thing, which has a 'shelf life'!). Sugar substitutes have been found to be unpleasant, unhealthy or downright dangerous to health – far from the reasons for bringing them into production.

16. The value placed on marriage by many in the community – across age, ethnicity and socio-economic background – means that marriage is worthy of respect. As leaders of this society, it is your responsibility to carry and maintain that respect. You have been entrusted with the role of being our Parliamentary representative. Please do not disparage marriage by treating it as disposable. As legislators your first duty is to protect, not destroy, the well-being of your constituency. The DLP is strongly committed to enhancing and protecting the traditional family. You should be, too, for this unit is the only bulwark against the depredations of the state and the best opportunity of health, wealth and happiness of the traditional family members.

17. Accepting as "marriage" something which is not will have grave implications for many in our society. Ministers of religion and many civil celebrants will have conscientious objection to formalising as a marriage something as sterile and unproductive as same-sex unions. Acknowledging such unions as "marriages" will impact on the conscience of such celebrants, whether religious or not, and on the conscience, the rights and the valid practice of religious organisations. Granting a "right" to homosexual "marriage" will both betray and destroy churches, religious traditions and faith communities.

18. Whatever is the intended ersatz pronouncement about two adults of the same sex, marriage it is not – because it can never be a biological, psychological, social OR spiritual union.

19. If the ***Marriage Act*** is amended to allow two people of the same sex to marry, why not three people? Why not more? Will the sex of the parties no longer count? If polyamory is encouraged, is not polygamy the logical extension?

20. With polygamy encouraged by at least one world religion and a prominent sect, and such polygamous practices involving many "wives" for one

"husband", will the imbalance of 'available' men and women (with 'available' women reducing in number) result in social disruption and increasing violence against women (as in India, for example)? How will you respond to such social disruption?

21. Recent events have dissolved any pretence that the clamour for homosexual "marriage" is anything other than an assault on marriage. What has emerged – real people enacting truly surreal fantasies in public and in sight of the media – is truly startling. Some claim to love and to "marry" themselves; another "married" her guitar; another artwork; another a building. Is it now feasible to now "fall in love with" and "marry" anything one fancies?? Perhaps even an idea??

22. Perhaps you would like to ponder this, and to place your own child, grandchild or very young relative in the place of the children in the United Kingdom whose grandparents were denied the right or the opportunity to care for their biological grandchildren, who had been placed for adoption with two homosexual men by the local social services authority. The natural family of these children was threatened with never being able to see their children. The children's biological mother was suffering depression and had not abused her children: she needed assistance, not Big Brother! The distraught grandparents and the natural mother were denied any justice – indeed, denied any say in the matter – because of the pro-homosexual agenda of the child welfare officers. [How sad that the welfare of these children came last!] Such a scenario will certainly become more common if homosexuals are granted the rights and privileges of normally, naturally married people.

I look forward to your response, and await your commitment to maintain marriage as *the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life*.

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for and on behalf of
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