

# **Additional Comments**

## **The Australian Greens**

1.1 The Australian Greens believe that the committee report is an excellent articulation of the reasons why the question of marriage equality should be resolved by a vote in the Parliament. We strongly affirm this view.

1.2 The Greens are convinced by the evidence from witnesses and submitters who voiced serious concerns about a popular vote and agree that it is undesirable to amend the definition of marriage in this way. We give serious weight to the evidence of the harm that LGBTIQ members of the community, and their families may suffer as a consequence of the public campaign accompanying a plebiscite.

1.3 The Greens note the intention of the current Government to proceed with a plebiscite after the next election, which could be undertaken using executive power. The evidence presented to the committee indicates that this would be an inappropriate course of action, with potential to cause serious harm to LGBTIQ Australians and their families.

1.4 The Greens believe that if a plebiscite is being pursued then it should only be considered in conjunction with the next federal election, and under the following conditions:

- The framework for its conduct should be the subject of a bill agreed to by Parliament.
- Voting should be compulsory.
- A Joint Select Committee should be established to consider all aspects of the conduct of the plebiscite.
- The question for electors should be researched and developed by the Australian Electoral Commission.
- To ensure that the views and human rights of all participants are respected and upheld the Greens firmly believes that appropriate parameters must be established around:
  - public advertising for the plebiscite and regulation of the media, including social media;
  - funding arrangements for the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns;

- appropriate limitations on campaigning, including the period of time during which campaigning is allowed; and
- the impact of campaigning on vulnerable people, particularly those in the LGBTIQ communities, and social support services available to them.

**Senator Janet Rice**