

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

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Question No. 80

Senator Hanson-Young asked the following question at the hearing on 23 February 2009:

A recent Galaxy Poll of Queensland residents found that 60% of Queenslanders agree that same-sex couples should have a civil union with the same legal rights and responsibilities as marriage and that 54% agree that same-sex couples should be able to marry

(Source:http://www.qahc.org.au/files/shared/Galaxy_Poll_Report_1_.pdf). In the past the Government has indicated that they do not believe same-sex couples should have the right to marry as it is ALP policy and in line with the view of a majority of Australians. The Government's current position is one of state based civil union schemes or relationship registers as is the preferred term. Given the recent survey's relatively minor difference between public support for marriage and civil unions, why will the Government continue to withhold the right for same sex couples to marry?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Government does not support legislation that would undermine existing laws that define marriage as being between a man and a woman. However the Government does support a system for the recognition of relationships between same-sex couples. It is the Government's view that couples, whether same-sex or opposite sex, who have a mutual commitment to a shared life should be able to have their relationships publicly recognised or registered.

The Government supports a state-based, nationally consistent scheme for the registration of committed adult relationships that are not marriages.