

Open Letter to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on Proposed Rights for Same-Sex Couples

Dear Mr Rudd,

I welcome the government's commitment to maintain the definition of marriage as an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman voluntarily entered into for life.

However, I am greatly concerned that the government's proposals to "remove differential treatment of same-sex couples" in all Commonwealth laws (except for the Marriage Act 1961) would seriously undermine the status of marriage in Australia. These proposals also have profound implications for the well-being of the children of our nation.

Governments have granted marriage a privileged status not given to other types of relationships, for two key reasons:

- only marriage provides the best environment for raising children - stability plus complementary male and female role models (Mum and Dad);
- men and women complement each other in marriage - benefiting each other and society.

Research shows that marriage is the most enduring of human sexual relationships - more stable than male-female cohabitation and far more stable than homosexual relationships.¹ Children raised by their married parents do better than those raised by cohabiting parents, who do better than children raised by same sex partners.² Children brought up in non-marriage contexts have higher rates of physical and mental health problems, child abuse, criminality, drug abuse and poor academic performance.³

Governments give benefits to married couples because marriage benefits society in a way that same-sex relationships can never do. It is therefore unreasonable and unfair to extend to same-sex couples equal treatment with married couples under Commonwealth law.

The government's proposals also involve a new concept of "child" in which Commonwealth law would legitimise the biologically nonsensical fiction that a same-sex couple relationship can "produce" a child. This concept deprives the child of his or her true identity by the pretence that the child's parents are two men or two women, and the child has either no dad or no mum.

While this proposal may satisfy demands by same-sex adults for a legal equality with married couples that they can never have by nature, it is plainly contrary to the best interests of the child. I earnestly ask you to abandon these proposals and to adopt instead a consistent approach to the support of marriage and the well-being of children.

I assure you of my prayers for you as you carry out your responsibilities for the welfare of our nation.

Yours sincerely,

Attached are the names and postcodes of 6408 people who have signed this open letter.

1. Andersson, G., "Divorce-Risk Patterns in Same-Sex Marriages in Norway and Sweden", *PAA 2004 Annual Meeting*, Boston, 1-3 April 2004.
2. Sarantakos, S., "Children in three contexts", *Children Australia*, 1996, Vol 21, No 3.
3. Wardle, Lynn D, 1997, "The Potential Impact of Homosexual Parenting on Children", *University of Illinois Law Review*, 1997, Issue 3, p 833.