



Merrin Thompson
Principal Council Officer
Law and Justice Committee
Legislative Council
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

18 March, 2009

Dear Ms Thompson,

Please find below our response to two questions on notice from the Same-sex Adoption Inquiry. Please note that our response to a separate question from the Hon Greg Donnelly MLC was forwarded to you yesterday.

1). Some inquiry participants have argued that the current law is discriminatory against gay and lesbian couples. How do you respond to this suggestion?

We suggest that the law as it stands rightly focuses on the rights and best interests of the child rather than the rights of the parents. In a legal sense, the adoption of children is not about the legal entitlements of adults but what best meets the needs of children. This emphasis in the Act on the child's best interests and their need for a mother and a father reflects community standards about the optimum conditions in which children should be raised. For this reason we do not believe the current law is discriminatory, for its objective is appropriately to address the needs of the child.

2). On the day of the hearing the Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked *"Given the way in which there can be these significant doctrinal shifts, is it appropriate therefore to approach legislation from the point of view of religious doctrine? Is that an adequate basis, given that those grounds may be shifting?"*

From within the reformed Protestant church, the fundamental basis from which we speak is the bible. Biblical teachings inform our understanding about the world, life, death, humanity and our responsibilities towards each other. These teachings have not changed and remain true for every generation. Christians everywhere but particularly those who enter into public debate need to do the hard work of understanding and explaining biblical truths and how they apply to society.

So although we look to the authority that lies in the pages of scripture, we contend that there are universal truths that are evident not only from a religious stand point, but also to people who hold no religious views at all. Our aim is to contribute to modern civic discourse in a way that will benefit not simply Christian interests, but what we consider to be good for society as a whole.

We understand the role of legislators to be one of promoting the public good and to facilitate human flourishing. In doing this, we suggest that making good law and good public policy involves weighing up the evidence alongside the merits of all view points, including religious ones, to the extent that these arguments contribute to the public good.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide this input to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew C. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'F'.

Dr Andrew Ford

On behalf of the Social Issues Executive
Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney