

## **INQUIRY INTO SAME SEX MARRIAGE LAW IN NSW**

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I write to express my opposition to changing the definition of marriage.

It is clearly not logical to suggest that same-sex unions are the same as marriage. Being equal is not the same as being identical. It is not discrimination to treat different realities differently. To call the union of same gender couples "marriage" disconnects marriage from its grounding in the human reality of the male-female sexual relationship in the exclusive commitment we currently know as marriage. The fact is marriage is different from other kinds of relationships.

There is understandable sensitive empathy towards same-sex couples. A chaste love relationship between people of the same gender can be treasured and respected and afforded social recognition with the financial and legal benefits also available to a married couple.

I question whether the advocates for same-sex marriage really understand why others oppose it. Our opposition is not based on religious bigotry or a lack of respect for people who are gay.

Our opposition to same-sex unions being called "marriage" is based on the fact that heterosexual marriage has continued for millennia in diverse human societies as a sexual union of male and female partners oriented towards connecting fathers to mothers and their children. These are the only unions that can create new life and bond the children born of the marriage in love and nurture to their co-creators, their mother and their father. This does not seem to be understood in the current debate or, if understood, it does not seem to be regarded as integral and exclusive to marriage.

Despite a number of elements in common, the same-gender union differs fundamentally from heterosexual marriage which is open to the procreation of new life where possible, and is based on deep human realities which were not created by Government, hence ought not to be changed by Government.

The role of Parliament ought to be to protect and strengthen heterosexual marriage and family as the basic unit on which our society has been built from time immemorial. Marriage is child centred and through our families each of us can trace our ancestry, our family traits and family history.

The creation of new life is not an accidental appendage to the marriage relationship. It invites parents to contribute a part of themselves to a new person who, it is hoped, will become in turn a selfless member of society – a person who makes a positive contribution to the common good of our wider society.

It is not only an assault on meaning and language to call heterosexual and same gender unions by the same name, but it discriminates against those who are in the unique and life-long union of a man and a woman in marriage.

In view of this, the debate should focus on finding an appropriate name for same-sex unions while recognising that marriage has its own unique identity.

It is my sincere hope that you may carefully consider what I have written and in light of it reject the thinking that seeks to call two different realities by the same name. The term "marriage" should be reserved to the union between a man and a woman and a different name be found to describe same sex unions. This in no way implies discrimination against persons in same sex unions nor does it detract from their human dignity. A confused understanding of the nature of marriage will have a negative impact on the next generation's attitudes towards marriage, child bearing and the importance of mothers and fathers.