



**THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WENTWORTH  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND BROADBAND**

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**Same Sex Marriage Survey Results**

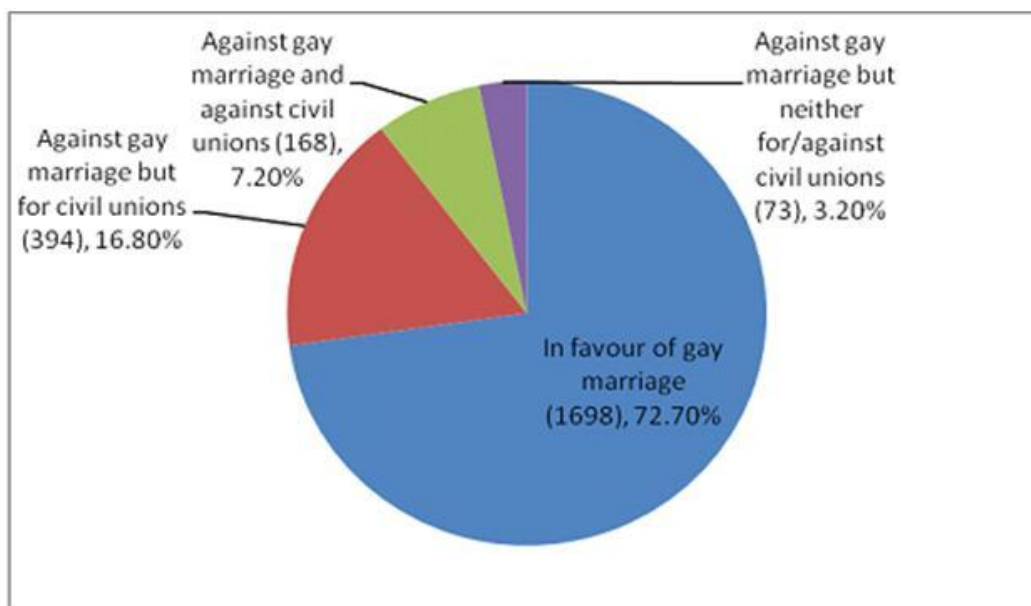
The results of the Wentworth survey on same sex marriage show a clear majority of respondents are in favour of amending the Marriage Act to allow same sex couples to marry.

There was an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response to the survey, with more than 4,000 responses filed in little over four weeks.

Of these, 2,333 respondents were listed in the electoral roll as being Wentworth residents. More than 72 per cent of them agreed with the statement that they are “in favour of gay marriage”.

An additional 16 per cent of respondents said they were in favouring of amending the Marriage Act to allow same sex couples to have their relationships recognised through civil unions.

Seven per cent of respondents were against amending the Marriage Act at all, while a final three per cent of people said they were against gay marriage but did not indicate a stance on civil unions.



One of the striking features of the survey was the time and thoughtfulness displayed by people who chose to leave comments. The topic stirs strong passions right along the political spectrum, but the responses showed a very clear indication that the vast majority of people have had to grapple with their individual consciences before coming to a conclusion.

**Arguments for Recognising Gay Marriage**

Former NSW Premier Nick Greiner said that he supports gay marriage as it is "self evidently a matter of justice":

- "It in no way stops religions or individuals acting in accord with their conscientious views. Also [it is] not a left/right issue. Support for proposal is consistent with conservative support for marriage and for stable long-term relationships as well as individual freedom."

Former Australian Medical Association President, Dr Kerry Phelps, herself in a long-term same sex relationship, said that the state should not be tasked with upholding religious mores and traditions when it comes to the institution of marriage:

- "The issue of marriage equality is a human rights issue. It is essential that the political/legal and religious aspects remain separated, as the majority of mixed-gender Australian couples currently choose to marry outside of a religious ceremony, and religions differ from each other on their positions with regard to performing marriage ceremonies for same sex couples. Similarly, there needs to be a separation of procreation from marriage. Many couples currently marry with no intention or biological ability (for instance because of age) to procreate. Yet increasing numbers of same sex couples are having babies and raising children. Those children deserve their families to have the same rights and protections as children of mixed-gender couples. The suggestion of "Civil unions" is an insult which would serve to perpetuate the inequality by creating a two-tier hierarchy of relationship recognition. It is not true that civil unions in other countries confer the same rights. It is not equality unless it is truly equal and I would not personally get "civil unioned", just as I suspect the majority of mixed gender couples wanting to marry would resist being forced to call their relationship a "civil union" rather than a marriage."

Thomas Murphy has been in a committed relationship with his boyfriend for 11 years and said homophobia is still alive in the community.

- "I have been to several weddings in the past 12 months and the words "to the exclusion of all others" hurt me deeply," he wrote. "I am sure that every gay person has dealt with that sense of "exclusion" at some point in life. These unnecessarily cruel words intrude an otherwise jubilant celebration of love."

Mark Beirne has been in a relationship for the past five years and simply wants the Marriage Act redefined to better reflect the life he already lives:

- "We are so wonderfully accepted by our multi-generational neighbours and the wider Double Bay community and strongly support same sex marriage legislation in Australia," he wrote.

Ashley Thompson wrote that gay couples' love is equal to heterosexual couples':

- "Who are same sex couples? Daughters, sons, cops, doctors, businesspeople, politicians, artists, parents. In short – Us, We, people, humanity. Love is love."

St Vincents' Hospital physician, Dr Alex Wodak, said there are public health benefits to ensuring same sex relationships in the institution of marriage:

- "I am ashamed that homosexual friends of my wife and I do not have the same options that we have had. I have spent the last 30 years in efforts to try and reduce the harms of HIV. We should also do everything we can to help gay couples stay together to protect public health."

See more comments in support of gay marriage [here](#).

### **Arguments for Recognising Civil Unions**

A substantial number of people supported the idea of amending our laws to recognise same sex couples through civil unions, similar to the practice in the United Kingdom.

Damoon Mehrpour, said the “UK has the balance just right. Civil unions, yes. Marriage, no”:

- “Allow homosexual couples to enter a civil union. There is substantial scientific evidence that homosexuality has a place in our society – specifically with regards to the levels of fertility in our population. But the state should not be allowed to meddle with religion, and force religious institutions to perform marriages that are not constitutionally recognised. The term marriage cannot be changed nor misrepresented, all we can do is to make sure they have the same right.”

Jonathan Rosenblitt said the difference between civil unions and marriage is semantic and the distinction should remain:

- “I have an issue with social ‘engineers’ continually attempting to redefine the meaning of words. The word ‘gay’ is a case in point. If you had to read a school essay from someone who was schooled prior to the 1980’s you would probably completely misread their intent. Find a new word to describe this type of union.”

Dr John W. Dale AO wrote:

- “While I am happy to support the rights of individuals and their freedom to live as they wish, I cannot support a contract between same sex couples described as “marriage. Furthermore, I believe that the welfare of the child is paramount in any relationship and I do not believe that this can be achieved by a same sex relationship.”

Read more comments in support of recognising civil unions [here](#).

### **Arguments for Maintaining the Marriage Act in its Current Form**

Meanwhile, there was also a number of people who argued against amending the Marriage Act in its current form. Mary-Lou Jarvis wrote:

- “I am not in favour of any diminution in the status of marriage as ‘ a union of man & woman to the exclusion of all others’ It has been suggested by others that my views are religious – they are not. Anyone that knows me also knows I am not homophobic. Marriage is an institution that forms the building block of society and by providing male & female role models has proved to be the best model for raising a family and providing a solid base for a future generation. That tenet should not be interfered with to suit a vocal minority.”

See more comments arguing against the amendment of the Marriage Act [here](#).

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