



# Tasmania and marriage equality

## Tasmania leading the way

Despite being the last state to decriminalise homosexuality in 1997, Tasmania has led the way on allowing same-sex marriages.

In 2003 Tasmania was the first Australian state to establish a civil union scheme for same-sex couples, and the second to allow official ceremonies for civil unions in 2009. In 2010 Tasmania became the first place in Australia to recognise overseas same-sex marriages and civil unions.

Tasmania also pioneered state same-sex marriage laws with such laws being introduced first in 2005, and again in 2008 and 2010.

"I support same-sex marriage because my daughter, her female partner and their child are a family just like any other family."

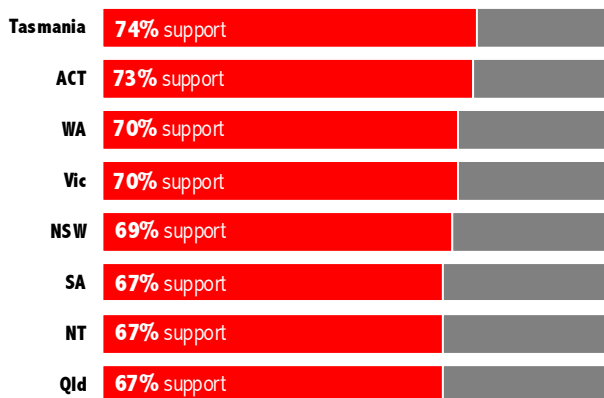
- **David Foster**, world champion Tasmanian axeman

## Public support for marriage equality is higher in Tasmania

In November 2010 a large-scale national Newspoll found support for marriage equality in Tasmania is 5% higher than the national average.

A Roy Morgan poll released in August 2011 found support in Tasmania to be higher than any other state or territory at 74%.

**Support for marriage equality: state by state\***



\* Roy Morgan poll, August 2011 (sample size 19,889 people)

## Prominent Tasmanians who support marriage equality

- **David Foster**, world champion axeman
- **Peter Cundall**, gardening guru
- **Bruce Felmingham**, economist and columnist
- **Greg Barnes**, fmr Liberal Party advisor, columnist
- **David Bartlett & Lara Giddings**, premiers
- **Nick McKim & Peg Putt**, state Greens leaders
- **Monique Brumby**, singer
- **Jaason Simmons**, actor
- **Carol Brown, Andrew Wilkie, Christine Milne, Bob Brown, & Lisa Singh**, federal politicians

## Political and media support

In 2009 the Tasmanian Labor state conference became the first in Australia to support marriage equality. It did the same again in 2011.

The Burnie Advocate was the first non-metro daily newspaper to support marriage equality. The Hobart Mercury was the first News Limited owned newspaper to do the same.

"Our attitude towards homosexuals and their right to marry needs to change. There is no logical argument against gay marriage. There are many countries that have been progressive enough to allow it and funnily enough the sky hasn't fallen in. If you think about it, it's really simple. If two people love each other, why should they not be allowed to marry?"

- **The Burnie Advocate**, Nov 2010



## The economic impact of allowing same-sex marriages

“There are economic benefits that would flow by having Tasmania at the top of queue on same-sex marriages. Look at the gains made by the California economy from being the first cab off the rank in recognising same-sex marriages as legitimate.”

- **Bruce Felmingham**, reader in economics at the University of Tasmania

The first state to allow same-sex marriages will benefit from a large economic windfall.

This “equality dividend” will be made of benefits to the private sector from spending on weddings and honeymoons, as well as direct government revenue from marriage license fees.

In the United State the economic benefits of allowing same-sex marriages has been an important reason for reform in states like New York.

The most conservative estimate of the value of allowing same-sex marriages to the Australian economy is \$742 million\*, plus \$20 million in marriage license fees.

If Tasmania became the first state to allow same-sex marriage it would benefit from a large slice of the same-sex marriage cake.

The impact on the state's relatively small economy would be dramatic.

*\* This figure is calculated by multiplying the number of same-sex couples in the Census by the percentage who indicate they will marry when it is legal by the average Australian wedding spend.*

“It's hard to explain to people who aren't gay what it feels like knowing the law stops me from marrying. It's not what I can't have that makes me feel excluded. It is what I can't give”.

- **Jackson Tegg**, aged 21, Hobart

## Can Tasmania enact its own same-sex marriage law?

Yes. Constitutional expert, Professor George Williams, has identified a constitutional loophole which allows states to legislate for same-sex marriage.

The power to legislate for marriage is shared by the Commonwealth and state governments. This means that if the Commonwealth doesn't legislate for a particular kind of marriage, in this case, same-sex marriage, that power falls to the states.

State same-sex marriage laws have been introduced in Tasmania and South Australia and have been flagged in NSW and Victoria, but none have yet passed.

Tasmania now has a unique opportunity to make a powerful statement about diversity and inclusion – by allowing same-sex couples to marry.

## What can I do to support marriage equality?

Please write to your local federal MP saying you believe same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. Even better, arrange a face-to-face meeting with your MP to explain your position.

For more on writing to your local MP go to:

**[www.australianmarriageequality.com/wp/tasmanians4equality](http://www.australianmarriageequality.com/wp/tasmanians4equality)**

If you're uncertain about how to support marriage equality, you can register for a marriage equality workshop. The next workshop will be in Hobart on 22 October 2011. You can register by emailing your name and contact details to: **[workshops@australianmarriageequality.com](mailto:workshops@australianmarriageequality.com)**