



AUSTRALIAN MARRIAGE EQUALITY

THE CASE FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY

WHY ALLOW SAME-SEX COUPLES TO MARRY?

- The failure of the law to allow same-sex couples to marry sends out the message that it is okay to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender and that same-sex partners are not capable of the level of love and commitment associated with marriage.
- Marriage creates a unique bond between partners and their families from which same-sex partners are excluded.
- Marriage provides health and well-being benefits, and security for partners and children, from which same-sex partners and their children are excluded.
- Marriage will benefit from being seen as less discriminatory and more relevant.
- Polls show about 72% of Australians support marriage equality, including 59% of Christians and 85% of people with children

ISN'T CURRENT RECOGNITION ENOUGH?

- Same-sex partners can legally be considered de facto partners. But only a marriage certificate gives instant and guaranteed access to relationship entitlements. It is also much more widely recognised and respected than de facto status.
- Civil unions are not as widely understood or respected as marriage and creating a separate name for same-sex relationships entrenches a different, discriminatory, second-class status for these relationships.

WHAT ABOUT RELIGION AND MARRIAGE?

- In our society marriage is governed by civil law and not by biblical values, for example we allow marriage between people of different faiths or no faith. We also allow divorce although some churches are against it. Using the religion argument against same-sex couples is a double-standard.
- Some Christian churches currently solemnise same-sex marriages and are discriminated against because the Government doesn't recognise these marriages in the same way it recognises the opposite-sex marriages performed in other churches.
- Religious celebrants are free to refuse to marry couples whose relationship they don't agree with and this freedom will remain when marriage equality is achieved.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

- The law does not say married opposite-sex couples must have children. This is why we allow infertile couples to marry.
- Using the infertility argument against same-sex couples is a double-standard.
- According to the 2011 Census, 6300 children are living in same-sex couple families. By allowing parents in these families the right to marry we are providing their children with the same rights, respect and recognition as other children.
- The Australian Psychological Society has found that children raised by same-sex couples are just as well adjusted, psychologically, sexually, intellectually and socially as their peers.

WILL MARRIAGE EQUALITY CHANGE OR DIMINISH MARRIAGE?

- It will remove discrimination from marriage in the same way discrimination was removed when interracial couples were allowed to marry in the 1960s.
- The rules governing marriage have changed many times, for example, wives are no longer treated as the property of their husbands, we now prohibit rape in marriage, and we allow divorce. But the basic definition of marriage as a lifelong commitment between a loving couple has not changed and will not change.
- In countries which allow same-sex couples to marry, marriage still exists, no opposite-sex marriages have been harmed, and the rates of younger heterosexual people marrying has actually increased.
- Incestuous and polygamous relationships have not been legitimised in any of the many countries that allow same-sex couples to marry.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT MARRIAGE EQUALITY?

- Please send a letter to your local MP saying you support marriage equality. Include your personal story about why marriage equality is important to you. Make it clear to your local MP that civil unions are not a substitute for marriage equality. Go to Australian Marriage Equality's webpage to send a letter to your local MP: www.australianmarriageequality.org