

# News Release

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**Premier Mike Rann**

Minister for Economic Development  
Minister for Social Inclusion  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1700 HRS ACT  
Sunday, 9 October 2011

## **PREMIER RANN CALLS FOR SAME SEX MARRIAGE**

Premier Mike Rann today called on the Commonwealth Parliament to change the Marriage Act to allow homosexual couples to marry and enjoy the same full legal rights as heterosexual couples.

In delivering the 2011 Flinders University Investigator lecture in Adelaide late this afternoon, Mr Rann said it was time Australia legally recognised the equality and validity of all genuine long-term relationships.

“This must be done through the institution of marriage at a Federal level, rather than the halfway house of civil unions as recently introduced in some other States, as well as in New Zealand and the UK,” Mr Rann said.

“These civil unions are the escape clause for those who want to see ‘marriage’ reserved exclusively for relationships between a man and a woman.”

Mr Rann said his Government embarked on a series of law reforms after winning office in 2002 to try and restore South Australia’s standing as a progressive, innovative State after years of socially reactionary Government under the Liberals.

“Honouring the strong representations we had received from women’s groups, we undertook the biggest changes to our State’s rape and sexual assault laws in more than 30 years.

“We also, as a matter of priority, reformed South Australia’s once progressive, but then outdated sexual discrimination statutes.

“This included changing more than 90 laws to give same-sex couples equality in matters relating to property, superannuation benefits and compensation.

“In other words, the same recognition that’s enjoyed as a civil right by heterosexual de-facto couples.”

However, Mr Rann said he was not satisfied that these reforms went nearly far enough to recognise the rights of same sex couples.

“To be fair, civil unions confer many of the rights of marriage, but they take place under separate legislation, not the Marriage Act, which is exclusively the responsibility of the Commonwealth.

“Critics of civil unions rightly argue that rather than afford the same recognition and security as marriage, they are instead a second-class institution and are viewed as inferior - or not recognised at all - by the wider community.

“I certainly respect people who hold different views, and I understand there are those who believe that the Marriage Act is sacrosanct, given that it enshrines the long held view of marriage existing only between a man and a woman.

“However, I cannot myself support that view.”

Premier Rann said that same-sex marriage is now legal in a dozen or more countries, many of them nations that have not previously been renowned as flying the flag for civil libertarianism.

“In addition to accepted trailblazers such as the Netherlands, Scandinavian nations and Canada, same-sex marriage is now enshrined by law in Spain, Argentina and South Africa, and legislation is imminent in Slovenia, Paraguay, and even Nepal.

“Whilst I applaud the Federal Labor Government for amending more than 80 pieces of legislation to remove discrimination against same-sex couples, and for recognising civil unions, in my view this does not go far enough.

“It is, quite simply, unfair to prevent same-sex couples from having their relationship – a union that is viewed as equal in every other aspect of the law – being recognised as a legal marriage.

“It only serves to undermine the legitimacy of their relationship, and their family.

“Same-sex marriage is an idea whose time has well and truly arrived.

“Not to address this discrimination will diminish us as a nation, as a tolerant community.

“What are we so afraid of? Why is this next step so threatening?

“For the Commonwealth to change the Marriage Act to confer equal rights for same sex couples is not only the right thing to do, it will further protect and enhance Australia’s proud reputation as a forward-thinking, tolerant and diverse nation,” Premier Rann said.