



14 September 2015

Media Release

Launceston Chamber Links Marriage Equality To the Economy

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce Board considered the issue of Marriage Equality as part of its monthly Board agenda late last week. Debate centred on how Marriage Equality aligned with the Chamber's strategy.

The Board unanimously determined that by ensuring all of our community can participate productively in our region will lead to improvements to productivity and therefore increased economic development within the region. The Chamber's research into the issue showed a linkage between discrimination, mental health issues and productivity.

Maree Tetlow, Executive Officer, at the Launceston Chamber of Commerce said that "same sex couples who are devoted to each other and want to be legally married should have the same opportunities as heterosexual couples, with all of the emotional and legal benefits which that attracts."

"If they cannot marry the current law implies that a relationship between same sex couples cannot be of the same quality and integrity as the marriage of heterosexual couples."

According to Beyond Blue the research indicates that LGBTI have a higher risk of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, self-harming and suicide than the broader community, primarily due to the violence, prejudice and discrimination they face.

Ms Tetlow stated that "the community pays a significant premium to support people with mental health issues, and the productivity of workplaces is also significantly impacted by these issues. Encouraging inclusiveness and respect in the workplace is best practice globally, and allows each individual, regardless of gender, race, religion, etc to fully contribute. Being in a work environment free of discrimination brings out the very best in people and maximises productivity." "In the Chamber's view our business community can ill afford to remain silent on issues which are a barrier to the performance of our economy.

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Nor should we remain silent on an issue which rates some of our colleagues and customers as second class citizens” she said.

In summary, the Chamber notes that more time has been given for debate on proposed laws to allow same sex marriage on Monday, 14 September and would request that Parliamentarians give consideration to the views of the Business sector regarding Marriage Equality in their deliberations.

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