



## Same-Sex Marriage- There's more to it than you think

Rational debate on the impact of allowing same-sex marriage is being denied to ordinary Australians because those with opposing views fear being labelled as 'homophobic' or a 'right-wing extremist' and potentially face attacks on their business or personally.

"The powerful gay lobby is entitled in a democracy to state their view, but it is also the right of mainstream Australia to hear opposing arguments and to express their opinion without fear," according to former Navy barrister Sophie York, spokesperson for the newly formed Marriage Alliance.

"The view of the Marriage Alliance is that permitting same-sex couples to marry under a changed Marriage Act would have major consequences not realised or understood by most Australians.

"Our Alliance has the backing of many businesses, community organisations and ordinary people who are alarmed that important public figures and the media are either staying silent on the issue, or backing a misguided 'politically correct' position rather than encouraging open discussion," she said.

Mrs York said the rights of children were being subjugated by arguments about equality between gay and heterosexual adults. Taking a back seat are the more important issues about the consequences and the rights of future generations, sex education, religious freedom, morality, business and professional regulations, and legal implications resulting from permitting same-sex marriage.

She asked why the Australian public was not being told about the overseas experience where kids in kindergarten were being forced to learn about homosexual relationships without the knowledge of their parents, or what the impact has been on children actually growing up in a gay or lesbian household. Where is the discussion on curriculums being changed in primary schools to promote alternative lifestyles, or business owners and individuals being sued for expressing moral or religious opposition to same-sex marriage?

"Social engineering damages a functioning society. People should be accepted regardless of their sexuality, but attacking the institution of marriage between a man and a woman - which in every culture on earth is naturally designed to create a family unit – at its very heart takes away the rights of a child to have a mum and dad."

It is important to note that to bring up this discussion is not anti gay. It is an entirely neutral question being raised. That is, whether changing the definition of "marriage" will have serious consequences that are not properly shed light on. There are concerns around the larger affect it has on other areas of life that are not sufficiently discussed.

**Joint Statement on behalf of Muslim and Christian  
Representatives  
Marriage Alliance Media Conference**

**Wednesday 12 August 2015**

On behalf of those Muslim and Christian communities whom we represent, we declare that we believe that there should be no change to the traditional definition of marriage as spelled by the 2004 Amendment incorporated into the Marriage Act 1961. The amendment reads:

“Marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others voluntarily entered into for life.”

We are very concerned about the rush to introduce new legislation allowing for Same-Sex Marriage (“SSM”), **which is wrong both in policy and in principle.**

It is wrong in policy because far-reaching changes should not be implemented in haste. Parliamentarians of Australia have a duty to lead the debate over SSM rather than opportunistically seeking to garner votes by jumping onto what seems to be an irresistible bandwagon. They should be encouraging people to reflect upon what marriage is all about, its parameters, its relationship to child-rearing and how children shall be raised outside of the institution of traditional marriage. Studies of the children raised in same-sex unions have produced conflicting results. It would be wrong and unacceptable to allow children, those who are the most vulnerable, to be born into situations where it may transpire that the situation they are born into is too often unsuited for a balanced and healthy development.

The rush to amend the current Marriage Act is also wrong in principle because even the weakening of marriage has had disastrous consequences in the society we live in. One does not need to be religious or to refer to the natural order to appreciate this, although for us, as Christian and Muslim community leaders, these concerns are

significant and should be respected. The so-called “promiscuous society” has resulted in a generation where commitment and loyalty are disappearing, and in their place selfishness is flourishing.

On the other hand, we are not calling upon Parliamentarians to adopt religious principles simply to gain points in the polls. But they should **consult with their constituents and respect their views** as they hold these principles, and recognise that they have proved their value in social and human, not to say spiritual, terms.

We see no reason to believe the breezy assertion that we who do not agree with altering the traditional nature of marriage will be unaffected by it, and that the laws of Australia will respect our principled stand.

Any amendment to the Marriage Act can be expected to unleash further changes in the nature of State-sanctioned marriage. We are all members of the one society. What affects one, affects the other, not least in that the law has a formative effect upon expectations and values. **While people attracted to the same sex currently enjoy relationship equality**, where they live in committed relationships and are cherished as people with dignity, we do not see why this has to be “marriage”.

On what basis will our faiths and their ministers be protected if we refuse to celebrate religious same-sex marriages? If same-sex marriage is implemented it will only be a matter of time before someone sues us for refusing to marry them to their same-sex partner.

What begins as an attempt to allow **freedom of choice for some people may well end in denying freedom of worship to many others.**

We have already arranged for a meeting with the Prime Minister, and have written to the Leader of the Opposition, seeking a similar encounter.