

Australian Baptists View on Same Sex Marriage

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The National Council of Australian Baptist Ministries reaffirms its support for the current definition of marriage as between one man and one woman, and rejects moves to extend the definition to include same sex relationships.

Consistent with this position people associated with Baptist churches are encouraged to duly exercise their biblical convictions and conscience in the proposed postal plebiscite, over and above cultural pressures.

As a member body of The Coalition for Marriage ABM endorses the concerns relating to the potential impact of changes to the definition of marriage on religious freedom, safe school programs, gender identity and freedom of speech. Details of these concerns are outlined on the Coalition website at www.coalitionformarraige.com.au

As previous statements by the National Council have enunciated there are compelling cultural and heritage reasons for rejecting this proposed radical social reform, and for Baptists there are also deeply held theological convictions about the nature and purpose of marriage which preclude widening the definition of marriage to include same sex couples. A strong society needs a strong commitment to marriage and family. Marriage is best understood as the union of a man and a woman.

For more than 400 years Baptists have affirmed the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible teaches that the only appropriate context for sexual intercourse is between a woman and a man who are married to each other.

In November 2010 Australian Baptist Ministries (formerly the Baptist Union of Australia) reaffirmed marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and has commended the Australian Government for reflecting the biblical teaching on marriage in the federal Marriage Act.

Australian Baptist Ministries, representing more than 300,000 Baptists in 950 local churches, supports the rights of all couples to justice with respect to property and like entitlements and acknowledges that people, including some in Baptist churches, face issues with respect to sexuality. Recognition of such rights and issues does not justify major changes to our convictions about marriage or to marriage legislation.

The Baptist World Alliance, representing over 47 million baptised believers and 210 Baptist Unions and Conventions in more than 200 countries, shares the views of Australian Baptist Ministries on marriage.

At the Baptist World Alliance annual gathering in July 1994 in Uppsala, Sweden, the BWA General Council passed a resolution confirming that the BWA "proclaims the biblical definition of the family, a permanent, monogamous, heterosexual union, as the original divine plan for family life which must continue to serve as the foundation and ideal for an ordered and effective society." This resolution was reaffirmed at the Baptist World Alliance annual gathering at Ede, The Netherlands, in 2009.