



The Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

In reply please quote: 549021/1

18 DEC 2012

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Level 18 State Law Building
50 Ann Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 149 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3247 9068
Facsimile +61 7 3221 4352
Email attorney@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 1900-12 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 27 November 2012 and Petitions 1905-12 and 2024-12, both received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2012, regarding the *Civil Partnerships Act 2011* (the Act).

Petition No. 1900-12, presented by Mr Curtis Pitt MP, Member for Mulgrave, on behalf of the principal petitioner, Mr Matthew Donovan, requests the Parliament to not consider any measures that seek the removal of the equal rights achieved under the provisions of the Act.

Petitions No. 1905-12 and No. 2024-12, both presented by the Clerk of the Parliament on behalf of the principal petitioner, Ms Wendy Francis, call on the Parliament to repeal the Act in line with the Liberal National Party (LNP) election promise.

This letter responds to all three petitions. The LNP made a clear pre-election commitment to review the Act.

On 22 June 2012, the Queensland Parliament passed the *Civil Partnerships and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012*, which amended the Act to:

- remove the provisions which allow a couple to hold a State sanctioned ceremony before a civil partnership notary prior to registration of the relationship;
- remove the provisions which allow a person to be registered as a civil partnership notary;
- simplify the termination process by providing for an administrative termination process rather than a judicial process;
- change the short title of the Act to the *Relationships Act 2011*; and
- amend the terminology from 'civil partnerships', 'civil partners' and 'cooling off period' to 'registered relationships', 'registered partners' and 'registration period'.

(2)

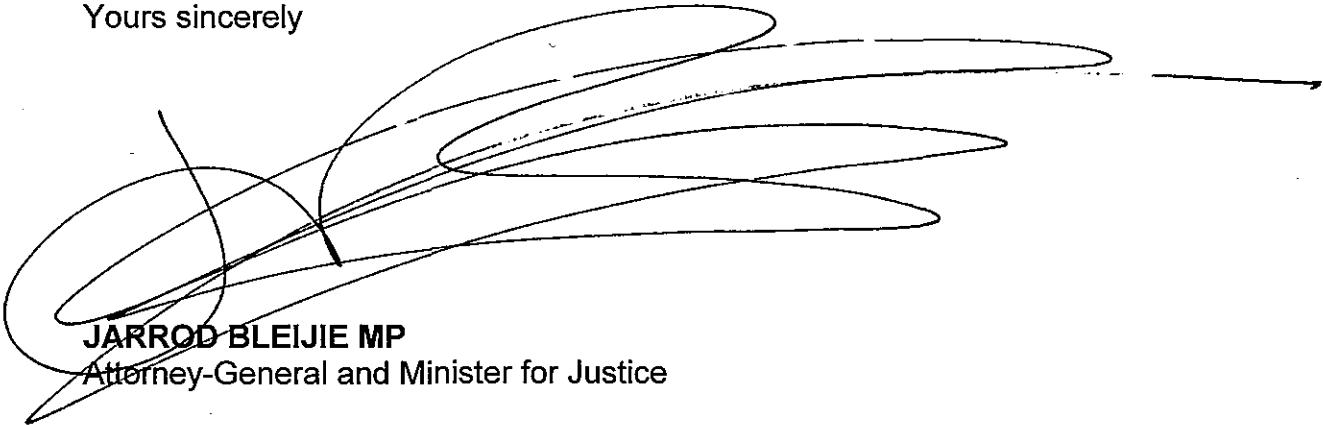
These amendments, removing the Government sanctioned civil partnership declaration ceremony and the provisions allowing a person to be registered as a civil partnership notary, brought the Act into line with the interstate relationship registration schemes in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

The amendments commenced on 27 June 2012 and continue to allow a couple, regardless of their gender, to register their relationship. The transitional provisions preserve the rights of couples whose relationships were registered prior to 27 June 2012.

The Government is of the view these amendments strike a sensible balance between preserving the institution of marriage as a life long commitment between a man and a woman under the *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth), while still retaining the relationship registration scheme to allow an adult couple to register their relationship to gain legal recognition of their status, primarily for medical and financial purposes. No further amendments to the legislation are currently being considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these petitions.

Yours sincerely

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JARROD BLEIJIE MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice