



QUEENSLAND COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

G P O B o x 2 2 8 1 B r i s b a n e 4 0 0 1

visit and contact us at www.qccl.org.au

The Research Director
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

By email: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill

I write to you on behalf of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to this Bill.

The Council for Civil Liberties welcomes this Bill to allow for the recognition of gay and lesbian relationships in the form of civil partnerships.

It is the Council's view that gay and lesbian couples in loving relationships should be given the same status as heterosexual couples in such relationships. Official recognition of their status will provide a legal basis for defining their rights and responsibilities which will benefit society.

Tradition by itself cannot stand in the way of the demand for equal protection before the law. If it could, slavery would persist, aristocrats would still run our governments, and women would not be voting.

It is often argued that marriage and similar relationships are in fact about having children, and those who cannot have children should not be allowed to marry or form similar relationships. This is a fallacy. Of course, not all couples can have children, and not all couples intend to have children. Divorce is not compulsory on the basis that a couple is infertile. People are allowed to get married on their death bed.

Nor is the reverse true. Being able to procreate cannot be a prerequisite to being able to raise children, otherwise we would ban in-vitro fertilisation and other forms of assisted reproduction.

Additionally it has now been clearly shown that gay and lesbian parents are as effective as heterosexual parents in raising children, and children are not harmed when raised in same-sex couple households.

Many people argue the case for not extending marriage to gay and lesbian couples as if marriage were an immutable institution. It is not. Wives used to be treated as the property of their husband. Until twenty five years ago, rape within marriage was lawful in Queensland. Marriage is no longer forever.

To those who see the very existence of these relationships as an affront to their religious belief John Stuart Mill's reply remains as potent as it was 150 years ago "There are many who consider as an injury to themselves any conduct which they have a distaste for, and resent it as an

Watching them while they are watching you!

outrage to their feelings; as a religious bigot, when charged with disregarding the religious feelings of others has been known to retort but they disregard his feelings, by persisting in their abominable worship or creed. But there is no parity between the feelings of a person for his own opinion, and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it; no more than between the desire of a thief to take a purse and the desire of the rightful owner to keep it" *On Liberty et cetera Three Essays by John Stuart Mill* Oxford University Press 1911 reprinted 1969 at page 103. Mill goes on at page 111 to say, "The notion that it is one man's duty that another should be religious, was the foundation of all the religious persecutions ever perpetrated, and if admitted, would fully justify them"

We trust that this submission is of assistance to you in your deliberations.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Michael Cope [REDACTED]
President [REDACTED]
For and on behalf of the
Queensland Council for Civil Liberties
15 October 2015
[REDACTED]