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Research Director
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015

The Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) wishes to convey its concerns with the *Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015* (the Bill).

The Bill attempts to mimic marriage in all but name. It would also see the re-introduction of partnership ceremonies. At a time when a national debate is taking place on the definition of marriage it is inappropriate for Queensland Parliament's resources to be used in this way. Marriage is a federal issue.

The effect of registering certain relationships as Civil Partnerships under the proposed scheme would be to raise those relationships to a status of special recognition equivalent to marriage. Many different kinds of relationships exist in the community, but it is only a relationship between a man and a woman that is capable of producing children, whilst binding them to their mother and father. Marriage is the only institution that both contains these important elements as well as being recognised formally in law. Marriage is deserving of this special protection precisely because it undergirds society and provides the optimal environment for children.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) explains the government's policy interest in man-woman marriage¹ in particular, by stating at Article 23:

- 1. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.*
- 2. The right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and to found a family shall be recognized.*

Marriage is the natural group unit of society because it is the institution through which society is naturally produced. In this way it is fundamental to society and is worthy of unique and special protection by the state.

¹ The Covenant's reference to man-woman marriage in particular is confirmed in *Human Rights Committee, Decision Communication No. 902.1999, 75th sess, (Joselin et. al v New Zealand), 8.2-9.*

Other relationships such a de facto relationships and same-sex relationships are already granted the same rights in law as married couples. In addition, same-sex and unmarried opposite-sex couples can already have their relationships registered under the QLD relationship register. There is no need to mirror marriage, which is a unique relationship worthy of special protection for relevant public policy reasons.

This Bill is bad policy.

Yours sincerely,



Wendy Francis
ACL Queensland Director