



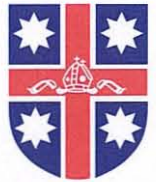
DIOCESE OF BRISBANE

(Anglican Church of Australia)

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DIOCESAN REGISTRY

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4 November 2011

LAPCSESC
Civil Partnerships
Submission 0862

Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Submission — Civil Partnerships Bill 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write in regard to the Civil Partnerships Bill 2011 which was recently introduced into the Queensland Parliament by Mr Andrew Fraser MP.

My submission is made on behalf of the Social Responsibilities Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia, Brisbane Diocese. As the current serving chairperson of the Committee I am authorised to make this submission and the statement contained therein.

Submission

The Social Responsibilities Committee offers its support to the Civil Partnerships Bill 2011.

We consider that the Bill addresses what philosopher John Rawls called a foundational principle of justice: that is, that *Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all* (from *A Theory of Justice*).

As it is presently drafted, the *Marriage Act* denies legal and social recognition to same sex couples. This recognition is available to all opposite-sex couples with legal capacity, regardless of any other characteristic. Recognising the union of same sex couples doesn't reduce the liberty of other couples to enter into legally- and socially-recognised partnerships — *so there is an inherent injustice in preventing same sex couples from doing so*.

The proposed legislation satisfies Rawls' test of justice because it provides legal and social recognition to same sex couples where there is currently none. It also provides a single legal institution of civil partnership which is common to same-sex and opposite-sex couples.

We are confident that the proposed legislation does not affect the right of churches or other religious groups to celebrate marriage according to their own understanding and religious beliefs. The *Marriage Act* clearly enables conduct of both civil ceremonies and those conducted by ministers of religion. We believe that the act and legitimacy of religious marriage is not denied or denigrated by enabling same sex couples — or opposite-sex couples who have different (or no) spiritual beliefs — to publicly commit to each other in a way that is legally and socially recognised.

The Anglican Church of Australia – Diocese of Brisbane

(The Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane)

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Thus, the Social Responsibilities Committee supports the proposed Civil Partnerships Bill because it removes discrimination, affords equal rights to same sex and heterosexual couples in civil partnerships, and recognises the pluralistic nature of our society.

I commend this submission to the Inquiry for your consideration.

Peace

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Catt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt
Chair, Anglican Social Responsibilities Committee
Anglican Diocese of Brisbane