



2 August 2011

LISA SINGH
LABOR SENATOR FOR TASMANIA



The Right Reverend John D Harrower OAM
Bishop of Tasmania
GPO Box 748
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Bishop,

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2011 regarding the definition of marriage. The current debate about the concept of marriage is one about which many people have strong views, and I appreciate you taking the time to share the views of the Tasmanian Anglican community.

Marriage is both a deeply personal and deeply social institution. It is both a commitment offered by the couple to each other, and a means by which the value and dignity of a couple's love is formally recognised by those who seek the acceptance and support of their community. In both cases, it is a symbol of loving union between two people.

One of the most important and enduring values of Australian society is its respect for difference, based on the inalienable dignity of any person. We recognise this dignity by allowing all people to have equal opportunity to realise their dreams, and equal access to community life: in cultural practices, in work and in recreation. However, the legal definition of marriage, as it stands, denies same-sex couples, gays and lesbians the dignity that Australian values would rightly accord them in love. I believe it is discriminatory, and incompatible with the expectations of an equal society.

As a member of the Australian Labor Party, I have a strong commitment to collective decision-making, and have pledged to uphold the platform of our Party. As it stands, our Party supports the current legal definition of marriage. I will not, therefore, be supporting any legislative change currently before Parliament. However, should the opportunity arise within the Party to amend its position, for instance at the National Conference in December, I will be supporting any amendment that recognises the equal dignity of all Australians.

While I understand that the Tasmanian Anglican community maintains a particular understanding of marriage, it is incumbent upon me to legislate for all Australians. I believe that the time is right for Australia to leave behind discrimination in marriage law as we have in so many other ways. I would, however, like to thank you for taking the time to share your views with me.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Singh
Labor Senator for Tasmania

152 MACQUARIE STREET, HOBART TAS 7000
GPO BOX 271, HOBART TAS 7001
www.lisasingh.com.au

P. 03 6223 1135
F. 03 6223 1250
E. senator.singh@aph.gov.au