



PADDINGTON UNITING CHURCH

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

2 April 2012

Dear members of the Committee,

We write to briefly indicate the support of Paddington Uniting Church for the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2012.

Paddington Uniting Church has a long and proud history of inclusion of the GLBTI community. We have been an 'open and affirming' church for many years, sponsored the first Uniting Church float in the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade in 1998, led discussions within the church and with the wider public about celebrating sexual diversity while also acting responsibly and with care for self and others, and recently appointed an openly gay minister (a joint-first for a major denominational congregation in Sydney).

The church congregation spent considerable time in 2011 researching the issues and discerning a position on marriage equality. We considered both secular and theological arguments in favour and against marriage equality.

On 27 November 2011 the Congregation unanimously passed a resolution to support marriage equality.

Members of the Congregation were aware of a number of matters:

1. The importance of distinguishing between 'public policy' arguments about marriage equality and religious or theological arguments relevant only to religious organisations,
2. The overwhelming public policy arguments in favour of changing the law to allow marriage equality, and
3. The strong theological arguments in favour of marriage equality within the church, while noting the existing Uniting Church in Australia definition of marriage excludes same-sex couples.

We hope the Committee is clear that not all religious organisations and people in Australia oppose marriage equality. Attempts by anyone to suggest otherwise should be disregarded.

Yours faithfully,

pp.

Reverend Ben Gilmour
Minister

