

7 Reasons Why Australians Deserve a Plebiscite

- 1. It's time to ask the Australian people:** There have been 16 failed bills relating to same-sex marriage introduced into the Australian Parliament in recent years. Clearly, activists will not take 'no' for an answer, and will continue to push politicians to force legislation through Parliament. It is time that all Australians had their say on marriage. A public vote will allow the will of the people to be heard.
- 2. It acknowledges the importance of marriage:** The biological family is the foundational unit of Western civilisation. Changing the marriage law is about more than marriage - it is about a drastic and permanent change to Australian society. By giving all citizens a voice on this matter, a plebiscite acknowledges the importance of the institution of marriage to our society as a whole.
- 3. It acknowledges that change brings consequences:** Changing any law has consequences, intended and unintended. Changing the marriage law is no different. A plebiscite acknowledges that removing gender from marriage will create a ripple effect, which will extend beyond the emotional relationship between the couple involved, and will flow to education, employment and business.
- 4. It acknowledges that this decision affects everyone:** The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that according to the 2011 Census, same-sex couples represented about 1% of all couples in Australia, but proposed changes to the *Marriage Act* will affect 100% of the population. A plebiscite acknowledges the wide-ranging impacts of changing the law and tells every Australian voter that their view is important.
- 5. It protects freedom of speech:** Most people who want to defend marriage are too afraid to say this out loud, because every person who does so is branded a "bigot" or a "homophobe" and is already at risk of being penalised. A public campaign will uphold freedom of speech for all Australians.
- 6. It highlights the importance of public discourse:** Current attempts to shut down the plebiscite disregard the value of free and open discussion in a civilised society. Democracy is at its best when the public is informed and engaged on important issues. A plebiscite highlights the value of having ideas aired and tested in a respectful manner and rejects the assertion that there are certain ideas about which we should not speak.
- 7. It shows faith in respectful disagreement:** There have been unfounded claims that the plebiscite will encourage 'hate speech' and cause harm to the mental health of LGBTI persons. Not only does such an idea give credence to those who would argue that Australians should not be free to speak about this matter, it lacks faith in the ability of the Australian people to disagree without being disagreeable. A plebiscite sends a message that the Australian people can be trusted.

