

The Hon Bill Shorten MP
Leader of the Opposition

8th September 2016

Dear Mr Shorten,

We write to you seeking a way forward to finally legislate for marriage equality in the current Parliament without the need for an expensive and divisive plebiscite.

As you know, Parliament could vote on legislation to remove discrimination from our marriage laws and give every LGBTIQ Australian the right to marry.

There are currently two Private Members Bills to legislate marriage equality before the Parliament. There is the one sponsored by you, and one that we, members of the crossbench, have put forward as a cross-party bill.

In the last Parliament, the cross-party bill enjoyed the support of members of the crossbench, Liberal members and Labor members. We have put forward this same bill in the current Parliament as we believe that the best path forward for this important reform is a bill sponsored by members across the political spectrum.

We propose that instead of two bills proceeding, we all unify as co-sponsors of one cross-party bill. We believe that a bill that is not owned by one political party will have the best chance of attracting a Liberal co-sponsor, especially if legislation enabling a plebiscite is not passed by Parliament. With a Liberal co-sponsor, the chance of securing a free vote of Government MPs can only be increased. Having the support of several Government MPs will be essential to the bill passing the House of Representatives.

We hope that you consider our request and look forward to hearing from you before next Monday, when at this stage two bills are due for introduction.

Yours faithfully



Adam Bandt
Greens



Andrew Wilkie
Independent



Cathy McGowan
Independent