

## WHAT IS “MARRIAGE”?

Marriage is in essence neither a relationship of law nor of religion; it is rather a relationship of **nature** between a man and a woman, which existed for millennia before it became a matter of law or religion.

### Relationship of nature

There are many men and women in Australia living in long-term committed *de facto* relationships and who have brought forth and raised children. These men and women can rightly be said to be married to each other. Although they have never been formally married in a church, a synagogue, a mosque, a registry office or before a civil celebrant in a park or elsewhere, they are in fact living in a relationship of **natural marriage**; hence the expression *de facto* (as opposed to *de jure*). If asked why they have never officially formalized their union, many such couples in effect reply, “We do not need a piece of paper to prove that we are married”.

### Law

The laws and customs of nations, states, tribes or religious bodies do not create the relationship of marriage. It is a relationship between a man and a woman that is embedded in human nature. The purpose of laws relating to marriage is to give the natural relationship of marriage legal recognition within particular social contexts and to provide frameworks for the maintenance of spouses, the care of children and the division of property when some marriages unfortunately break down.

A man and a woman **marry each other**. They are **not married by** any celebrant or official. Celebrants and officials are witnesses to marriages.

Any understanding of “marriage”, legal or otherwise, must recognize that the relationship of marriage differs entirely from all other relationships between human persons. The love between a man and a woman who are married to each other is not the same as the love between a child and his or her parents, or that between a brother and sister, or between two sisters, or between those in deep and perennial Platonic friendships. Nor is it the same as the love between two persons of the same sex who are in a loving sexual relationship.

### Sexual intercourse

Sexual intercourse, with all it involves: sexual attraction, intimacy (both non-physical and physical), the complementarity of the sexes, pleasure, and the potential engendering of new life, distinguishes marriage (in its true nature) from all other relationships.

To speak of same-sex or gender-neutral “marriage” is nonsense. This is because the concept of marriage includes, of necessity, the act of sexual intercourse.

Two people of the same sex are capable of engaging in sexual activity with each other. But they are physically incapable of engaging in sexual intercourse with each other. To re-define “marriage” in such a way as to effectively exclude sexual

intercourse between the parties to the “marriage” is to strip from the concept of marriage one of its integral, essential and defining characteristics.

Marriage cannot exist where it is physically impossible to have sexual intercourse. Regardless of how deep and long-lasting the relationship between two people of the same sex may be, their lack of capacity for sexual intercourse renders their relationship incapable of being a marital relationship.

### **“Marriage Equality”**

To say that a “marriage” between a man and another man, or between a woman and another woman, is the same as a marriage between a man and a woman is like saying that potatoes are the same as oranges.

### **Children**

If the law were to re-define “marriage” so as to include relationships between people of the same sex, children would primarily and most severely endure the consequences. Any children brought into “marriages” between people of the same sex will have been wilfully denied at least one and in many cases both of their true genetic parents. These children will in fact be commodities.

### **Same-sex couples**

If the word “marriage” has any meaning at all, then the notion of “same-sex marriage” is nonsense. For Parliament to provide for “marriage equality” by re-defining marriage to include “marriage” between persons of the same sex would be for Parliament to legislate a fiction, a sham. People in same-sex relationships deserve better than that.