



Most Australian Christians support marriage equality

Most Australian Christians support marriage equality

59% of Christians support marriage equality, according to 2014 Crosby Textor research.

Christian support for marriage equality

The research also showed that **75%** of people who followed other religions agreed that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. **81%** of non-religious people also supported the right of same-sex couples to marry.

'Returning marriage to its rightful place'

When a couple want to be part of the institution of marriage, when they fully accept the same rights and responsibilities of marriage and treat marriage with the respect it deserves, why should they NOT get married? As a Christian minister, I believe that marriage is under threat from many angles, but also believe that recognizing same-sex unions will help return marriage to its rightful place in society.

Rev'd Matt Glover
Baptist Minister, Melbourne

Secular society, religious freedom

Today in Australia we all live in a secular non discriminatory society. Churches and other spiritual institutions exist within this society. It seems to me that in a secular and non discriminatory society gay couples should be as free to marry as any other human couple. If people wish to be married within a religious or spiritual institution's framework then they should accept the rites and rules of that institution. However it is the state that legitimises all marriages.

Rev'd Bill Crews
Uniting Church Minister, Sydney

'Honest reflection'

In matters of faith it is difficult for the heart to remain where the head cannot. Honest theological reflection in this modern era makes it impossible to see homosexual orientation and behavior as aberrant or sinful. Right relationships emerge out of moral and ethical decision making, not gay or straight orientation. I make my case for same sex marriage here.

Rev'd David Hunnerup
Uniting Church minister, Launceston

What religions condone or perform same-sex marriages?

In Australia: the Society of Friends (Quakers), some Jewish synagogues and rabbis, the Metropolitan Community Church, and individual congregations and celebrants within the Anglican, Uniting Church and Baptist churches.

Over 100 leading Christian ministers have publicly declared their support for marriage equality including several Anglican bishops.

In other countries: the United Church (Canada), some diocese of the Anglican Church (Canada) and the Episcopal Church (US), some congregations of the United Church of Christ (US), the Methodist Church (UK), the Evangelical Lutheran Church (some US and German states), the Protestant Church (Netherlands), the Mennonite Church (Netherlands), the Lutheran Churches of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, the Unitarian Church, and progressive Jewish synagogues in the US, Canada and Western Europe.

Whose freedom of religion?

Some religious leaders oppose marriage equality because they fear their churches will be forced to marry same-sex partners and therefore have their religious freedom violated.

However, when marriage equality becomes law, religious celebrants will remain free to refuse to conduct same-sex marriages in the same way they are currently free to refuse to marry divorced partners or partners of different faiths.

Some people of faith also fear that marriage equality will mean they can no longer express or act on their religious values. In Australia, state and federal anti-discrimination laws deal with discrimination on the grounds of religion or sexual orientation in services and education, as well as hate speech. These laws will remain unchanged by marriage equality.

Where freedom of religion is a very real issue is for those churches and religious celebrants who believe they have a religious duty to treat same-sex and opposite-sex unions equally.

The religious freedom of these faiths and celebrants is being violated because the same-sex marriages they solemnise do not have the same legal standing as the heterosexual marriages solemnised by other religions.

" My husband David and I married in a Quaker ceremony in Canberra in 2007. The irony of being able to have a religious ceremony but being prevented from achieving legal recognition due to arguments about the 'sanctity' of marriage has always struck me as absurd.

Evan Gallagher, Canberra

‘Radical hospitality’

As a follower of Jesus I believe in the principle of radical hospitality. This is at the heart of His message. All are welcome and all deserve the dignity due to them as human beings. I believe we express this through human rights and so access to marriage, a public expression of commitment and love, is an essential part of being human and an inalienable right.

As a progressive Christian I understand that the Bible must be interpreted in its historical and cultural context but also through the prism of the way of Jesus. As Christians we need to support those who are excluded and challenge those who through exclusion dehumanise and discriminate.

I urge you to join the campaign to welcome our GLBT friends to express their love and commitment to each other through this special rite.

Rev'd Roger Munson
Uniting Church Minister, Canberra

‘A gift from God’

As one of the same-sex partners who will attend a special dinner with the Prime Minister to discuss marriage equality later this year, I intend to speak about my Christian faith. As a

Christian I believe it is important that all people are treated with dignity and compassion. Jesus taught us to walk in each other's shoes and not to judge each other. I share a bond with my partner Louise and my two children that is a gift from God. I look forward to the day when we can celebrate and affirm that gift through the rite of legal marriage.

Sandy Miller, Sydney

Our commitment

Australian Marriage Equality is committed to respecting the deeply and sincerely held beliefs of those who oppose marriage equality. We will always debate the issues at stake in a mature way that does not denigrate the views of others. We ask opponents of marriage equality, including those from faith backgrounds, to reciprocate by refraining from attacks on others that inflame prejudice, stigma or hatred. Just as we acknowledge that it is possible to oppose marriage equality without hating homosexuals, so we ask those who differ with us on this important issue to acknowledge that it is possible to support marriage equality without seeking to undermine marriage, family or religion.

‘Stability for children’

From a Christian point of view, marriage is an institution designed to serve two social needs:

1. Contribute broadly to social stability
2. Provide a stable environment for the nurturing of children.

If this is the case then the only questions Christians need to concern themselves with when it comes to the issue of gay marriage are these two:

1. Would gay marriage lead to greater social stability?
2. Would a married gay partnership be likely to provide a more secure environment for the nurturing of the children of a gay couple than an unmarried one?

I think the answer to both these questions has to be ‘yes’.

Fr Dave Smith
Anglican parish priest, Sydney

‘A blessing to be shared’

How can I, a heterosexual who's been very happily married for 50 years, tell anyone else they don't have the right to form a loving, committed, lifelong union and enjoy the fruits of marriage as I have done? Marriage is not a club to be restricted to some. Like the Gospel, it is a blessing to be shared.

Rev'd Rowland Croucher
Baptist Minister, Sydney

‘Immense healing’

As someone who grew up in an evangelical church and am now a psychologist I have seen the profound damage done by condemning, excluding and discriminating against same-sex attracted people. I have also seen the immense healing and wellbeing that comes from people of faith embracing their gay and lesbian Christian peers and standing up for equality. We can't change sexual orientation but we can begin to change the hard-hearted laws and attitudes which hurt and limit gay and lesbian people.

Paul Martin MAPS
Principal Psychologist, Centre for Human Potential,
Brisbane