



AUSTRALIAN
LAWYERS
FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

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Media release

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Australian Lawyers for Human Rights Calls on Parliament to Block the Plebiscite.

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (**ALHR**) has joined almost 90 organisations calling on the Australian Parliament to block the proposed plebiscite and instead engage in a free vote pursuant to law.

The High Court has unanimously stated that marriage equality is permitted under the Australian Constitution.

ALHR's LGBTI Subcommittee Co-Chair, Nicholas Stewart, said: *"We are in good company when we say this plebiscite has to be blocked. It will be divisive, hurtful, wasteful and contrary to the Westminster System of Government. The highest court in our nation has said that parliament has the power to make marriage equal, yet it is proposed that the general populous should somehow have a say on whether a minority should be allowed to marry. It is absurd."*

Mr Stewart said he and his Co-Chair, Kathryn Cramp will make a submission on any bill before parliament to ensure marriage equality includes Australians who identify as gender and sex diverse.

The joint statement calls on the Australian Government to follow representative democratic principles and allow a free vote on marriage equality. Mr Stewart said, *"the statement makes it clear that our shared goal is simple – we want marriage equality as soon as possible but not at the cost of a risky, costly and unorthodox plebiscite."*

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ALHR was established in 1993 and is a national network of over 2600 Australian solicitors, barristers, academics, judicial officers and law students who practise and promote international human rights law in Australia. ALHR has active and engaged National, State and Territory committees and a secretariat at La Trobe University Law School in Melbourne. Through advocacy, media engagement, education, networking, research and training, ALHR promotes, practices and protects universally accepted standards of human rights throughout Australia and overseas.