

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No: 009-12



Subject: Same-Sex Marriage

TO: The Honourable the President and Members of the Legislative Council

Tasmanian citizens draw to the attention of the House the Same-Sex Marriage Bill 2012.

The Bill:

- (1) has a very low priority for most Tasmanian citizens, who would prefer that the government focus its efforts on health, the economy, jobs and education;
- (2) will be challenged in the High Court, causing the government to be further distracted from its core concerns for years; and
- (3) deeply aggrieves many Tasmanians, both from faith and non-faith backgrounds, who consider marriage to be a vital and natural bedrock institution that should not be redefined.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to reject the Bill.

Government Position:


The Government supports this reform because it fundamentally believes in ending discrimination wherever it exists.

However, in recognition that the issue remains sensitive to many people in our community, a conscience vote was granted to all Members of the Labor Party.

Government Response:

- The Tasmanian Government was disappointed that the Same-Sex Marriage Bill was voted down in the Legislative Council.
- In not supporting this legislation, I believe that Tasmania has missed an opportunity to lead the nation in ending discrimination against same-sex couples.

- However, despite the defeat of the legislation, I believe the Tasmanian debate has helped to raise awareness of the importance of equality and has made a positive contribution to the national discussion on this issue.
- And there are positive steps towards this important reform being taken around Australia and overseas.
- In the New South Wales Parliament, the Standing Committee on Social Issues is conducting an inquiry into issues relating to a proposed same-sex marriage law in that state, and in South Australia a bill for marriage equality will be voted on this year.
- Last year in the US elections the states of Maine, Maryland and Washington all supported same-sex marriage, while voters in Minnesota rejected a proposal to alter the constitution to ban same-sex marriage.
- Overseas this year we have already seen an overwhelming number of Members of the House of Commons support a Bill for marriage equality in the Westminster Parliament.
- What is particularly encouraging about the vote in the United Kingdom is that the laws there were introduced and strongly supported by the Conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, proving that this not a radical left reform.
- More recently the French National Assembly passed a Bill to allow same-sex couples to both marry and adopt.
- These actions across the United States, United Kingdom and France are all part of the global push to end discrimination against same-sex couples.
- The Tasmanian Government remains committed to supporting same-sex marriage legislation.



Lara Giddings
Premier

Date: 28-2-13