

MEDIA RELEASE

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Baptists do not support same sex marriage

Members of Baptist churches in Australia overwhelmingly support the current definition of marriage as between one man and one woman, and reject moves to extend the definition to include same sex relationships, National President of Australian Baptist Ministries, the Reverend Dr John Beasy, said today.

“Australian Baptists strongly urge Prime Minister Julia Gillard, and politicians across the political spectrum, to oppose moves to change the current legal definition of marriage by extending it to include same sex couples,” Dr Beasy said.

“There are compelling cultural and heritage reasons for rejecting this proposed radical social reform, and for Baptists there are also deeply held theological convictions about the nature and purpose of marriage which preclude widening the definition of marriage to include same sex couples,” the Reverend Rod Benson, public issues spokesperson for Australian Baptist Ministries, said.

“A strong society needs a strong commitment to marriage and family. Marriage is best understood as the union of a man and a woman, and the law is best left as it is,” Rev Benson said.

“For more than 400 years Baptists have affirmed the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible teaches that the only appropriate context for sexual intercourse is between a woman and a man who are married to each other. Those who argue otherwise have drifted away from biblical ethics and an authentic Baptist understanding of marriage,” he said.

In November 2010 Australian Baptist Ministries (formerly the Baptist Union of Australia) reaffirmed marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and has commended the Australian Government for reflecting the biblical teaching on marriage in the federal Marriage Act. Marriage is not the appropriate institution for same sex couples.

Australian Baptist Ministries, representing more than 300,000 Baptists in 950 local churches, supports the rights of all couples to justice with respect to property and like entitlements and acknowledges that people, including some in Baptist churches, face difficult issues with respect to sexuality. Recognition of such rights and difficulties does not justify major changes to our convictions about marriage or to marriage legislation.

The Baptist World Alliance, representing over 47 million baptised believers and 210 Baptist Unions and Conventions in more than 200 countries, shares the views of Australian Baptist Ministries on marriage. The Baptist World Alliance views homosexual lifestyle as incompatible with the teachings of Scripture and no BWA member body affirms, promotes or approves of same sex marriage.

At the Baptist World Alliance annual gathering in July 1994 in Uppsala, Sweden, the BWA General Council passed a resolution confirming that the BWA “proclaims the biblical definition of the family, a permanent, monogamous, heterosexual union, as the original divine plan for family life which must continue to serve as the foundation and ideal for an ordered and effective society.” This resolution was reaffirmed at the Baptist World Alliance annual gathering at Ede, The Netherlands, in 2009.

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