

Media Release

Catholic Communications

Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

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The ACT Government is trying once more to impose upon the community same-sex civil unions which include ceremony and celebrant. It is anomalous that such legislation which will have impact upon the national agenda should be passed in a small and unusual jurisdiction which has no house of review.

It is vital for the life of the nation that marriage be supported and promoted in every way possible at a time when it is under severe pressure. To establish a form of civil union which mimics marriage adds inevitably to that pressure, since it reduces marriage between a man and a woman to one of a number of equally valid options.

The marriage ceremony is more than a formal recognition of a relationship between two people. It is a formal recognition that this particular relationship between a man and a woman is uniquely important to society as a whole, in large part because it can produce children and provide the best environment in which they can grow to maturity. Other relationships, however important and enriching they may be, do not make the same contribution to society and, therefore, do not warrant the same kind of formal recognition.

It is wrong to deny justice to homosexual people. But justice concerns rights and duties; and in this case we are not talking of the right of some to which there corresponds a duty for all. We are talking of a desire – something which some may want but to which they are not necessarily entitled. In this case, the kind of civil union desired by some undermines the common good, which is served only where marriage between a man and woman is identified and supported as unique and uniquely important for society. For a government to confuse desires and rights is bound to lead to bad law; the same is true when a government focuses upon the individual at the expense of the community as a whole.

In the last electoral campaign, the Prime Minister made a clear commitment to prevent marriage being undermined in this way, and until now he has shown admirable resolve in holding to that commitment. Now is the time for Mr Rudd and his Government once more to act in the interests of the Australian community as a whole by overturning the ACT legislation and supporting marriage as they have done before.

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