



# Remember Friday 18 February 2005!

That's the deadline for submissions to the Social Development Committee on the **Statutes Amendment (Relationships) Bill**.

It's also the deadline for telling the Committee if you (or a delegation of friends) want to give oral evidence in addition to your written submission. It would help if many people could tell the Committee in person why the status of marriage needs to be preserved.

You may have already written to MPs about the Relationships Bill - but this is a new parliamentary committee inquiry. New letters are needed as submissions. They can be short or long. You can download a copy of this 70 page bill from: [www.parliament.sa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au) (click on "Legislative Council", then "Bills", then type "Statutes Amendment Relationships Bill" in the search box).

Address your submission to: **Ms Robyn Schutte**, Secretary, Social Development Committee.

Post it to: Parliament House, North Terrace, ADELAIDE SA 5000 - or email it to: [sdcc@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:sdcc@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Use the heading: **Statutes Amendment (Relationships) Bill**. Include your name and postal address.

## **Some points worth making (in your own words):**

- The Statutes Amendment (Relationships) Bill would delete the word "spouse" from almost all SA laws where it is mentioned, replacing it with "domestic partner", a term which includes a homosexual or lesbian partner.
- Marriage is defined as a man-woman union in *federal law*, but this *state* legislation would make marriage irrelevant - by giving other relationships, including same-sex relationships, the same status as marriage.
- Marriage was downgraded in 1975 when de facto relationships of five years' standing were given the status of marriage in SA. The Relationships Bill would further downgrade marriage by cutting that time to a mere three years, and by including same-sex couples who can never model a natural family.
- The long-term effect of the Relationships Bill, by downgrading the status of marriage, would disadvantage children because fewer parents would see marriage as important. Research has shown that children do best when raised by both natural parents who are committed to each other and their children through marriage.\*
- Another long-term effect of the bill would be to normalise homosexual behaviour - with the risks to society which this would entail.\* All schools could be required to teach that such behaviour is normal and acceptable.
- An examination of the Relationships Bill shows that the word "spouse" need not be deleted across the board in order to address grievances raised by homosexual activists. For example, the Administration and Probate Act (Part 2 of the bill) already includes a provision for people other than a spouse to be given assistance when an estate is frozen. Moreover any couple, including close companions who do not have a sexual relationship (domestic co-dependants), can make wills and can grant each other enduring power of attorney and medical power of attorney so that their partner can visit in hospital, make end of life decisions and plan the funeral. Couples who buy property together can do so as "joint tenants", thus avoiding stamp duty on the death of one partner.
- Sections of the bill which require de facto or same-sex couples to reveal financial interests need redrafting. Whereas marriage requires living partners to make commitments before witnesses on the public record, this bill (Part 27) would allow de facto or homosexual couples to establish their relationship in a closed court, possibly after the death of one partner, and it would be an offence punishable by up to a year in jail or a \$5000 fine to publish details. It could be impossible to prove at a particular time that such couples were "domestic partners" in the terms of the Relationships Bill, and conflict of interest legislation could be unenforceable. Moreover domestic co-dependants or close companions should also be included in such provisions.
- Domestic co-dependants or close companions have as much claim as homosexual or lesbian partners to compensation on the death of their partner as a result of a vehicle or work accident.
- The factors to be considered by the court in deciding whether a couple are or have been de facto partners (Part 27 of the bill) are imprecise and since proceedings are secret, justice would not be seen to be done. The three year requirement should be changed to retain the existing five year period.
- Every Act mentioned in the bill should be examined to see if legitimate grievances could be addressed by means other than striking out the word "spouse" from the Act.

\* For more details, including documented resource papers on the crucial role of marriage in society, and some risks associated with homosexual behaviour, contact Mrs Roslyn Phillips, B Sc, Dip Ed, research officer, Festival of Light Australia, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 68 Grenfell Street, Adelaide 5000 phone 8223 6383; email [office@fol.org.au](mailto:office@fol.org.au)