



Australian Youth
Affairs Coalition

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition
604 / 28 Foveaux St,
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Phone: 02 9212 0500
Fax: 02 8079 6166
Email: admin@ayac.org.au

www.ayac.org.au

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

2nd April 2012

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

In relation to the proposed amendment to the *Marriage Act 1961*, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) seeks to acknowledge and highlight the overwhelmingly strong support young Australians have shown for marriage equality.

According to a recent survey more than 80% of young people believe that same-sex couples should have the same right to marriage that heterosexual couples enjoy¹. Past surveys have also demonstrated this high level of support².

AYAC would also like to highlight the high rates of discrimination LGBTIQ youth face in their communities, with 79% of queer students reporting that they have been verbally or physically assaulted due to their sexual orientation³. Such discrimination and harassment has significant damaging effects on young people's health and well being, and increases their likelihood of experiencing depression, anxiety and suicide. A move to marriage equality will help to reduce this.

AYAC urges the Government to support the proposed amendment to the *Marriage Act 1961*.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cummings
Executive Director

¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 2012

¹ Galaxy Research 2010

¹ Hillier, L et al. 2010