



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

MEDIA STATEMENT

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WA BARRISTERS SUPPORT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CHANGES

The Bar Council of the Western Australia Bar Association (WABA) has declared its support for amending the *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth) to allow for same-sex marriage.

Matthew Howard SC, President of the WABA, said that the issues which were of concern to Bar Council were equality before the law and for laws not to discriminate arbitrarily between people.

“Barristers, as professionals engaged to represent parties before the Courts, have always been committed to the ideals of equality before the law and for the law to operate fairly – both of these are important rule of law issues,” Mr Howard said.

“However, the present definition of ‘marriage’ in the legislation discriminates unfairly against certain people. The legislation regulates when the law and society will recognise and sanction an act of marriage, but this recognition is currently denied arbitrarily to certain people.”

Mr Howard acknowledged that there may be barristers who were personally against amending the *Marriage Act* and that the right to hold such views must be, and is, respected. However, for Bar Council, this is not a political issue, but rather one which relates to the equal treatment of people by the laws of the country.

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