



Wednesday, 27 July 2016

Malcolm Turnbull, MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia to urge Parliament to directly and promptly make the decision on marriage equality.

We believe that the suggested plebiscite involves a direct cost of over \$180m, which is money that could be better spent. The plebiscite is an attempt to have a national opinion poll, which may not involve compulsory voting and will not bind the parliament to vote in accordance with the result.

Quakers have acted on the Equality Testimony in many ways throughout their 350-year history. Australian Quakers have supported the celebration of same-sex commitment ceremonies since 1994 and recognise them on an equal basis with other committed and loving relationships.

Experience of debates on recent social issues, as well as the recent election campaign, has shown that extreme public statements are made on all sides, which show little respect for those with differing views and reflect badly on those making them. This is not only divisive at a national level but can also be very damaging for some of the individuals who are the subject of the debate. Quakers called for marriage equality some years ago and hope that it will come soon.

Australian Quakers believe that all people have the right to be treated equally under the law. That includes the marriage law.

Parliament has previously changed the marriage Act. We call on the new parliament to do so again and to make legal marriage available to all couples.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Julian Robertson, Presiding Clerk  
The Religious Society of Friends  
(Quakers) in Australia

**Australia Yearly Meeting**

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