



Committee Secretary
Select Committee on the Exposure Draft
of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

20 December 2016

Progressive Judaism is guided by the belief that every human being is created "in the image of the divine," as it says in Genesis 1:27, "And God created humans in God's own image; in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them."

Alongside this basic principle, we recognise Torah's call to pursue justice in a just and equitable manner (Deuteronomy 16:20, "Justice, justice shall you pursue"), as well as the obligation to show respect and dignity to all people, kinsman and stranger alike (Leviticus 19:18, 33-34).

Therefore, we believe that every individual regardless of age, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation has equal rights and should be treated accordingly. Regardless of circumstance or context, discrimination against any person, whether it arises from apathy, insensitivity, ignorance, fear, or hatred, is inconsistent with these fundamental beliefs. We oppose discrimination against all individuals, including the GLBTIQ community, for the stamp of the divine is present in each and every one of us.

On this basis, the President and the Board of Governance along with the Rabbis of Temple Beth Israel support marriage equality and the rights and privileges therefore afforded.

We believe that two people who wish to join in lifelong union through a religious ceremony should be able to do so without prejudice. In anticipation of this principle being enshrined in the laws of Australia, our Council has previously resolved to permit any of its members to perform "same sex commitment ceremonies" when they are approached to do so. Members of the Council are free to perform or desist from performing such rites at their personal discretion.

We hold that the bill under discussion will extend justice to people who are currently being discriminated against, and therefore it receives our support.

Respectfully yours,

Gersh Lazarow
Senior Rabbi

Kim Ettlinger
Rabbi

Michel Laloum
Cantor

Robert Hershan
President