

Statement by Pastor Brian Houston on Same Sex Marriage August 2017.

Dear Church,

I urge all Christians to be a part of the upcoming postal plebiscite on same sex marriage. Whatever your view on this issue, it is undeniably one that is important to the fabric of our social structure. Changing the definition of marriage has wide-reaching ramifications and should not be taken lightly by any society. All Australians should be a part of this process, not just a select few.

For Christians, the issue is also a matter of faith and biblical teaching, something that should never be mocked or downplayed by those with opposing views. I believe God's Word is clear that marriage is between a man and a woman. The writings of the apostle Paul in scripture on the subject of homosexuality are also clear, as I have mentioned in previous public statements.

Throughout this entire debate, some on both sides of the argument have failed to understand and respect the views of others. Some of those advocating for change to the definition of marriage have confused faith convictions with bigotry however they must understand that Christian – and other religious – beliefs are extremely important to those who hold them and in fact are vital to a tolerant and free society.

Sadly some also use Christianity to alienate and even condemn those who are gay and dismiss their desire to pursue happiness. As a Christian pastor, I will always teach and preach according to scripture and to my personal convictions, but I cannot make other people's choices for them. God created humanity with a free will, and I care about all people including those who believe differently to me.

In less than a month, Australians will receive the ballot papers, which gives us all the ability to cast a vote on the issue of same sex marriage. Hillsong Church already functions well and without impediment in other parts of the world where same sex marriage is legal, and as long as we are not forced through legislation to compromise our biblical convictions, we can quite comfortably continue to function whatever the outcome of this plebiscite.

It must be emphasised however, that for Christians to obtain an outcome consistent with their beliefs, they must vote. I believe that many Australians who are often referred to as the 'silent majority' feel strongly on this subject but allow louder and often more aggressive voices to control the public dialogue. This plebiscite provides us all with an equal voice and we should not waste this opportunity.

Love and Blessings,

Brian Houston
Senior Pastor - Hillsong Church.