



14 August, 2017

## **SAME SEX MARRIAGE COMMENTS**

The Catholic community, like all other groups in society, has a right, through its formal channels, to express its views on contentious issues and to propose, though not impose, what it considers the best way forward. This is true of the same-sex marriage issue as it is of so many others.

When Catholics form their views on such matters, many look to the Church for guidance. We have a long tradition of philosophical, theological and moral thinking which can help us make up our minds.

As Archbishop of Perth, I have already published a Pastoral Letter to the Catholic community explaining the Church's position (2015). Given the recent decision to conduct a voluntary postal-vote on this question, I will in coming days write again to clarify the Church's teaching. There are two fundamental questions to be addressed: the first is whether or not a change in the definition of marriage in Australian Law will further the common good of our society; the second is whether or not, should such a change occur, the right to freedom of religion, not just for clergy but for all people, will be fully recognised and protected.

As a Catholic community, we will certainly want reassurance that our right to teach what we believe, and to conduct our institutions in accordance with our beliefs, is not undermined or removed.

To expect people to respond to the first question without clarification about the second is unreasonable.

I will do my best to help the Catholic community understand the reasons for the Church's position on this delicate and, for many, distressing question. I know it is a position in which many others are also interested. Any comments I make will be publicly available on our website, [www.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au)

I certainly hope that all eligible Catholics will exercise their right to express their views in the privacy afforded by a postal ballot. And even more, I hope that all Catholics, along with the rest of our society, engage in the debate over the coming months with dignity, with charity, and with respect for all.

**Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB**  
**Catholic Archbishop of Perth**

### ***For further information or comment***

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