

Position Statement:

Marriage Equality Plebiscite

- ❖ The AAAH strongly opposes a plebiscite on marriage equality.
- ❖ A plebiscite on marriage equality will be detrimental to the mental health of young people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.
- ❖ The AAAH believes that all young people are entitled to equal legal rights, regardless of sexuality or gender identity.
- ❖ The Parliament should amend the *Marriage Act 1961* to enable people of diverse sexualities and genders the same legal rights to marriage as all people.

The AAAH is strongly opposed to the proposed plebiscite on marriage equality in Australia due to the detrimental effects it will have on the mental health of young Australians of diverse sexualities and genders.

Adolescents and young people of diverse sexualities and gender consistently report poorer mental health outcomes than heterosexual peers due to discrimination and negative public attitudes.¹ Research also suggests that same-sex attracted people are up to 14 times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual people, with the average age of first attempt being 16 years.²

A public debate on this issue will allow a forum for ill-informed, baseless views that perpetuate stigmatised views of our fellow citizens of diverse sexualities and genders. The Australian Electoral Commission has estimated the plebiscite costing 158 million, exclusive of 7.5 million of public funding for a “no” vote campaign that will only enhance this stigma.

Young Australians deserve to grow up in a country where their innate diversity is celebrated – therefore the Australian Parliament should amend the Marriage Act 1961 to enable marriage equality.

Endorsed by the [AAAH Board of Directors](#) 10 October 2016

¹ Robinson, KH, Bansel, P, Denson, N, Ovenden, G & Davies, C 2013, Growing Up Queer: Issues Facing Young Australians Who Are Gender Variant and Sexuality Diverse, Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne.

² Rosenstreich, G. (2013) LGBTI People Mental Health and Suicide. Revised 2nd Edition. National LGBTI Health Alliance. Sydney