

# MARRIAGE EQUALITY – LET'S WIN THIS!

Hi everyone,

We're the Amnesty LGBTQI Advisory Group and we want to introduce you to Amnesty International's Marriage Equality campaign and share some of our ideas and tips on how you can join us to take action.

Of course we are disappointed that we are facing a postal survey. Human rights should not be up for debate, and marginalised people should not need to seek the approval of the majority to be treated with equality, respect and dignity. However, given the recent High Court ruling that the survey will go ahead, we will be out in force across the country campaigning for a Yes vote. We encourage you all to join us.

You may have noticed posters going up in your local Amnesty Action Centre declaring it a safe space. As a collective we are very proud of this initiative as we feel it is extremely important that our Action Centres across the country provide sanctuary and safety for people who are having a tough time during this difficult and, at times, vicious debate.

As campaigning intensifies we encourage all our activists, LGBTQI and otherwise, to take care of yourselves so as to minimise trauma, anxiety and turmoil, and to avoid burnout. We have a strong team behind us and a massive groundswell of public support on our side, so you don't have to go it alone! Together we will win this.

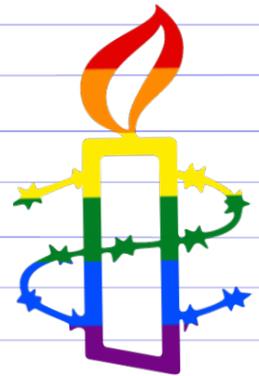
As well as creating safe spaces, we will be campaigning through phone banking, petitions, flash mobs and more! If you want to get involved, you can find your local [LGBTQI Amnesty Action Group here](#).

We hope you will join us in standing up for equality, dignity and love.

Love,

Jasmine and the rest of the Amnesty LGBTQI Advisory Team

PS. Keen to chat with other activists around the campaign? You can register for the monthly [LGBTQI activism hook up here](#).



## No one gets it done alone ...

We're really proud to be a part of the Equality Campaign and to be partnering with Australian Marriage Equality. Over 1000 state and national NGOs, business and community groups are a part of this campaign including Human Rights Watch, GetUp, Greenpeace and Australian Progress.



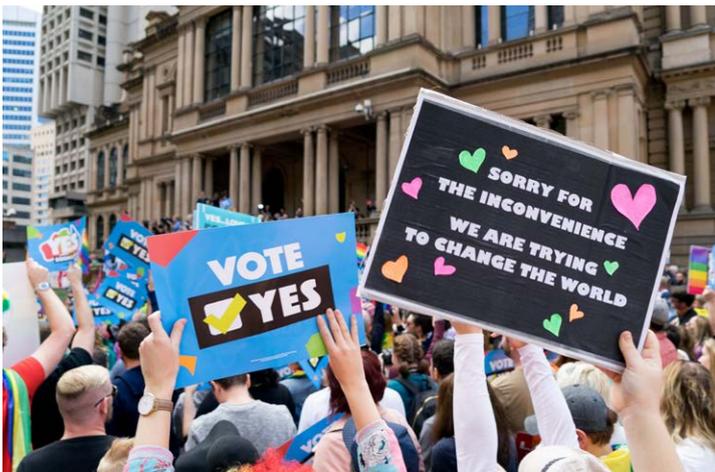
# WHY MARRIAGE EQUALITY?

Marriage matters to Australians. For many people it is the way they choose to express their love and commitment to their partner. At the moment loving, committed LGBTQI couples do not have that freedom.

Marriage equality is a human rights issue. LGBTQI couples are being denied the same basic right as their friends, family members and colleagues – the right to marry the person they love and have that marriage recognised before the law. The right of adults to enter into consensual marriage is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 16). No one regardless of their gender or sexuality should be denied the right to marry the person they love.

Debates on marriage equality have been raging for a long time now in Australia and it's about time we just got the job done. LGBTQI Australians have already had to endure decades of having their rights debated and the postal survey has simply unleashed even more hurtful and hateful rhetoric. A postal survey is not what we wanted. We should not have to vote on rights but this is where we are and now we just have to make sure we return a resounding yes for love, for fairness and for equality.

We know there is huge community support out there for marriage equality but we cannot and we must not be complacent. Now is the time to do all that we can to make sure we win this.



**#LOVEISLOVE**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP SECURE A 'YES' FOR LOVE!

1. **Vote yes.** Make sure you fill in your ballot and return it.  
Need to find your nearest postbox? <https://auspost.com.au/locate>.
2. Make sure you **let everyone else know** your plans to stand up for love – take the [online pledge](#) and then share it on social media.
3. **Talk to five people in five days** about your plans to say yes for love. Let's get real here – not five of your friends you already know are on the same page. Talk to those you're not sure about or who are on the fence. There are some handy tips at the end of this toolkit for handling tricky questions.
4. **Attend and promote rallies in your local area** and share, share, share any images. Why not even take a picture of yourself posting your ballot and remind your networks to do the same – don't forget the #marriageequality

## WHAT YOU CAN GET OTHERS TO DO TO TAKE A STAND FOR EQUALITY

1. **Host calling parties** in your home, on campus or even at your local Amnesty action centre and get other people to come join you to make calls. It's really simple; all you need to do is register to host a calling party at [www.yes.org.au](http://www.yes.org.au) and they will send you all you need to get started. They will even advertise your calling party for you.
2. **Hold solidarity actions** to let the LGBTQI community know that they have support. Here are some ideas. Hold booths and stalls in public spaces and ask people to join you in writing messages of love and support – take photos with an 'I support marriage equality because ..' placard and share them far and wide. If you're super savvy with a camera, make a solidarity video with your friends explaining why you will be voting yes for love.
3. **Paint the town rainbow** if you just want to get out there and hit the streets. Grab some chalk, get a group of friends together and literally paint the town. Why not try engaging passers by in conversation as you go? Head to our website to find some great resources to print off.

## 3 TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA SAFE

It's important that we continue to stand together in solidarity. Social media plays a big part!

1. Make sure you have consent to take a picture of someone.
2. Make sure you have their consent to share their image on social media.
3. If you're hosting an Amnesty event or action and you want to take crowd shots make sure everyone is informed of your intent and make an announcement that photos will be taken. Chat to your Activist Support Coordinator for more info about Amnesty's media consent forms.

## NEED HELP HANDLING THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS?

We know the debate is likely to get nasty, we know that the debate is likely to negatively affect our LGBTIQ family members, friends and colleagues and we know that opposing voices are going to be out in force. It's important that we don't get drawn into the cycle of negativity and hostility and instead focus on a message of love that reminds people that human rights are not negotiable.

REPLACE	EMBRACE
Same sex marriage	marriage equality
Children	for fairness for love and commitment for progress for families
I have a right to my beliefs	Everyone has a right to be treated equally under the law (human rights frame)
Vote yes	Say yes

### Is marriage equality actually a human rights issue?

Choosing to marry the person you love is a human right protected under article Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

'Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.'

Simply put everyone, without exception should be treated equally under the law and everyone should have the right to marry the person they love. Marriage laws should not discriminate on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation. This is why Amnesty International is campaigning for marriage equality

### Why is Amnesty campaigning on this issue? Aren't there more pressing issues in the world today?

Marriage equality is a human rights issue – it is about equality before the law. Yes, sadly it is not the only human rights issue facing Australia or facing the world but that does not detract from its importance or relevance.

Amnesty International campaigns on lots of different issues across the globe all at the same time. We strive to take action as and where we can and as much as we can. The rights of LGBTIQ people are at risk in many places around the world and as a global movement we mobilise and take action when these abuses occur.

This year we've worked on allegations of torture, abuse and murder of men who were perceived to be gay in Chechnya, attacks on transgender lawyer Samantha Seijas and her daughter in Venezuela, Bangladeshi men charged on allegedly homophobic motivated charges, and the rights of Barbaros Sansal - an LGBTIQ activist from Turkey.

## But does this mean schools will have to deliver programs I don't support?

Marriage equality will not affect the legal process of the Safe Schools program – these are two separate issues. State Government and your local school decide what gets taught in the classroom, and updating the Marriage Act will not change that. Equal marriage is about equality before the law and making sure LGBTIQ Australians are given the same rights to express their love and commitment to one another through marriage. Ultimately, we'd love to see our laws updated to teach our kids the values that we're most proud of as Australians – that all people should be treated equally.

## I don't believe in the institution of marriage so why should I vote?

That's a valid point, and there are some same-sex attracted people who feel that way too. But for couples who want to express their love and commitment to each other in this way they deserve the right to make that choice for themselves. Regardless of your feelings about the institution of marriage if you believe in fairness and equality than you should vote yes.

## What about religious freedom? Will churches be forced to marry same-sex couples?

You have a right to your religious beliefs and no religious group will be forced to marry a same-sex couple against their beliefs – just like some won't marry people who are divorced.

Marriage equality won't take anything away from the religious freedom of those who oppose it, but it will restore and uphold the religious freedom of those who support it. Over 100 prominent Christian ministers, including several Anglican bishops, have spoken out publicly in support of marriage equality. And research shows most Australians of faith support marriage equality.



Amnesty supporters at a marriage equality rally in Sydney, September 2017. © Abril Felman