



PARAMEDICS AUSTRALASIA

POSITION STATEMENT ON AUSTRALIAN MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Paramedics Australasia is the peak professional body for paramedics in Australia and New Zealand. Integrity and respect are cornerstones of Paramedics Australasia's member Code of Conduct and we embrace diversity, equity and inclusion in all that we do and strive for. We support our paramedics in providing sensitive, non-discriminatory care to all their patients, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

As a result of an amendment to the *Marriage Act 1961*, Australian same-sex couples are excluded from the institution of marriage; an omission that has significant psychosocial and physiological health consequences for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) identifying Australians, resulting in significantly poorer health outcomes than the broader population.

In addition, the lack of legal recognition of same-sex couples can have tragic consequences in medical emergencies, for example, when one partner may need to make decisions on behalf of their ill or injured spouse. Without a legally recognised marriage, individuals may not have the right to advocate for their partner, and decision-making power may be deferred to a member of the patient's immediate biological family.

In assessing the health, ethical and professional considerations around the issue of same-sex marriage, Paramedics Australasia moves to support marriage equality and the right of any adult and their consenting adult partner to have their relationship recognised under the *Marriage Act 1961*, regardless of gender. We seek equity in marriage for our LGBTQI paramedics and the broader LGBTQI Australian community.

Dr Peter Hartley
President
Paramedics Australasia
6 October 2017

Robyn Smith
CEO
Paramedics Australasia

Paramedics Australasia does not purport to represent the personal view of every member or director. However, we support the view that professional membership bodies have a responsibility to provide leadership in the service of the community. We are confident that the vast majority of our members and internal stakeholders support our decision to make this statement in the public interest.