Reason Australia believes that all members of society regardless of their gender, age, creed, sexual orientation, disability or general health have the right to pursue happiness, enjoy social acceptance, and engage as fully as possible with society, and that this pursuit should not be impeded by government without necessity clearly centered on the welfare of others.

What we all celebrate about liberal democracy is the empowering of the individual. Not at the expense of others, but so that others can profit from individual talent unrestrained by physical, psychological and social hindrance. It is from this perspective than RA supports legal recognition of marriage between any two individuals regardless of gender or sexual preference.

As so far expressed in public debate, arguments against permitting same-sex marriage do not accord with the principles above. The most tractable of these is the assertion that marriage is *by definition* an arrangement between a man and a woman. As this is the very thing that we advocate should change, to argue from this position is to simply restate the problem; nothing of substance is offered with which we can engage.

Other arguments focus on the claim that marriage is a traditional male-female construct that forms the basis of social and cultural values. Inherent in this position is the belief that, in the first case, only different-gender relationships are capable of delivering this outcome; it also ignores the large number of destructive relationships in which the needs of children are clearly not met by parents and the large number of single parent families, many of which are the victims of circumstance rather than choice, who succeed by any measure.

The necessity of family life as a consequence of human nature is unarguable collectively, but there is no demonstrable, congruent necessity for this to be exclusively centered on a male-female relationship.

Key to this debate is the use of the word ‘exclusively’. The assertion that support for same-sex marriage is in some sense an ‘attack on family values’ is a non-sequiter. The acceptance of the former implies no attack of any sort on the latter. It is the position of RA that gay marriage is about delivering social equality for gay people: it is an inclusive act that in no way limits the behaviour of others. No heterosexual relationship now or in the future need be impacted by this policy, and suggestions that this would be the case are unsupportable by any reasoned argument.

All we do in acknowledgment of this celebrates two types of freedom: freedom from and freedom to.

Marriage id ‘by definition’ – to argue this is to simply restate the problem.