



Neurodevelopmental and Behavioural  
Paediatric Society of Australasia

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## **CHILDREN ARE NOT HARMED BY HAVING SAME-SEX PARENTS, OTHER THAN BY SOCIETAL STIGMA**

### **AUSTRALIAN MARRIAGE LAW POSTAL SURVEY**

The Neurodevelopmental and Behavioural Paediatric Society of Australasia (NBPSA) is a professional body representing over 350 specialist paediatricians and doctors in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia, who support children with, or at risk of having, neurodevelopmental and behavioural challenges, in order that they have successful childhoods and reach their personal potential.

In the context of the current Australian Marriage Law postal survey the NBPSA has become aware of statements in the Australian public debate, claiming that children are disadvantaged or harmed by having same-sex parents. As specialists in child development and behaviour, we draw on scientific evidence and our extensive experience in working with diverse Australian families, to clarify for the Australian public the evidence on this issue.

Australian families are changing, and many children do not grow up in households with married, heterosexual, biological parents.<sup>1</sup> The evidence, and our clinical experience, do not support the concept of “an ideal family”. Whether a child is raised by biological or non-biological parents or by grandparents does not *per se* significantly impact their wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> Physical, psychosocial, psychological and educational outcomes for children in same-sex parented families are not different to children raised in heterosexual families.<sup>1, 3, 4, 5</sup>

Children of diverse families including same-sex parents do, however, experience the negative effects of stigmatisation of themselves and their families. Poorer health outcomes and increased rates of suicide have been documented<sup>6,7,8</sup>, and are exacerbated by prolonged public debates and ongoing discrimination.<sup>9,10</sup> The NBPSA believes that such discrimination needs to be highlighted and eliminated.

Good public policy should be predicated on solid evidence. We understand and respect that there are diverse views in this matter. We urge all those involved in the debate to avoid harmful stigmatization of young people living in LGBTI families.

Claims based on misrepresentation of the evidence, or beliefs not substantiated by evidence, do the claimants no credit and harm children.

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President  
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**Addendum:**

An article "[The kids are OK: it is discrimination, not same-sex parents, that harms children](#)" was published in the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA) shortly after this position paper. The NBPSA position statement and the MJA article were developed independently of each other; each supports and strengthens the other.

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