

ORDINARY MEETING  4 NOVEMBER 2014	5.11
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## MARRIAGE EQUALITY – LETTER FROM BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

Darryl Crees, General Manager Corporate Services:

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council determine the appropriate response to the invitation from Byron Shire Council to support marriage equality.**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Mayor of Byron Shire Council, Cr Simon Richardson, has written a letter (Attachment A) inviting Council to show support for marriage equality by:-

1. Adopting a “*Marriage Equality Proclamation*”, similar to that already adopted by Byron Shire Council (Attachment B);
2. Joining the “*Mayors for Marriage Equality*” group to be created by Byron Shire Council.

### **BACKGROUND:**

A letter has been received from the Mayor of Byron Shire Council advising that the Council supports marriage equality and strongly believes that same sex couples should have the choice to legally marry. The Byron Shire Council also believes that local government leaders across Australia have an opportunity to advocate for marriage equality.

Byron Shire Council has formulated a *Marriage Equality Proclamation* (Attachment B) and invites this Council to adopt a similar proclamation which will be collected with Proclamations from local government areas across Australia to present to the Prime Minister to demonstrate support from local government.

It is the intention of Byron Shire Council to create a broad based non-partisan group for Mayors in Australia called “*Mayors for Marriage Equality*” and the Mayor of Douglas Shire Council is invited to indicate support for the group.

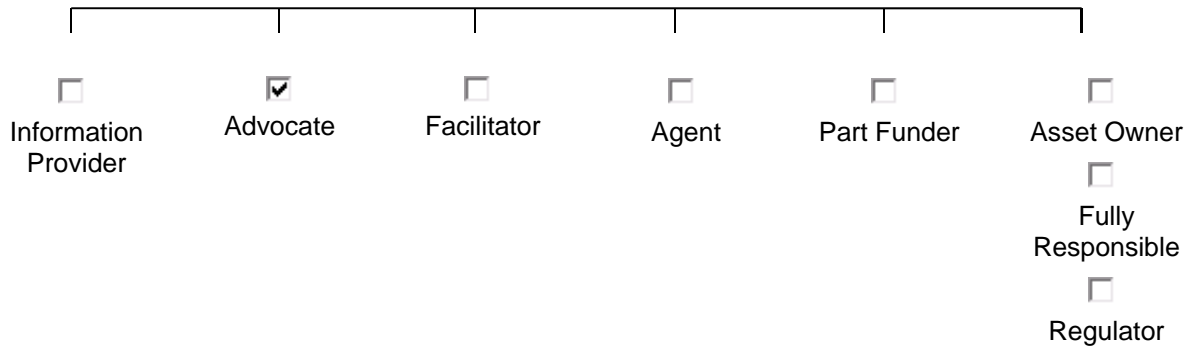
### **PROPOSAL:**

This letter has been presented for the Council to establish a policy decision on the matter.

### **COUNCIL’S ROLE:**

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council’s involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:



**Advocate:**

Supporting communities and groups by advocating for certain actions from other organisations (usually other levels of government).

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**ATTACHMENT A** – Letter from Mayor of Byron Shire Council

**ATTACHMENT B** – Marriage Equality Proclamation formulated by Byron Shire Council

## ATTACHMENT A



BSC File No: #E2014/49267  
Contact: Greg Ironfield

8 September 2014

Sent via email

Dear Mayor, Councillors and General Manager

### Support for Marriage Equality

Byron Shire Council supports marriage equality, and strongly believes that same sex couples should have the choice to *legally* marry in celebration of their relationship and as an illustration of their commitment to their union.

Byron Shire Council believes that denying same-sex couples the right to marry is discriminatory, and a violation of our residents' human rights. We believe, and surveys and polls consistently show, that the majority of our shire and indeed Australian society at large feels the same way. We believe that the time has come for our society to step up and correct this serious, social injustice. Lastly, we believe that local government leaders have an opportunity to help move Australia towards a fairer and inclusive society

Byron Shire Council have formulated a *Marriage Equality Proclamation* (enclosed). Today, I write to you to invite you to show your support for marriage equality by adopting a similar proclamation. When you do so, please forward it back to us for compilation. We will be collecting Marriage Equality Proclamations from local government areas across Australia, with the intent of presenting these to the Prime Minister to show that local government supports marriage equality.

Additionally, I am intending to create the group - *Mayors for Marriage Equality*, as a broad based, non partisan group for Mayors in Australia to advocate for marriage equality. We invite you as Mayor to indicate your support for this group, and we will look at ways to formalise and develop this collaboration.

We urge you to:

1. Adopt a similar Marriage Equality Proclamation (enclosed) and forward it back to us for compilation.
2. Join the Mayor's for Marriage Equality group. Please contact me if you would like to participate in this group at [simon.richardson@cr.byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:simon.richardson@cr.byron.nsw.gov.au)

For further information about Byron Shire Council's support for marriage equality, please contact Greg Ironfield, Manager of Sustainable Communities via phone 02 6626 7217 or via email [greg.ironfield@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:greg.ironfield@byron.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

Simon Richardson  
Mayor

Enc: Marriage Equality Proclamation



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THE BUNDJALUNG PEOPLE

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## ATTACHMENT B

# Marriage Equality Proclamation

We believe that marriage between two loving and committed adults, regardless of gender and sexuality, deserves to be celebrated, validated and acknowledged.

We believe that when people's love is not recognised by law, it is that law that needs to change.

We believe our elected leaders have a responsibility to protect the rights of all citizens.

We believe that Marriage Equality is about human rights and respect.

We believe in celebrating diversity and inclusion in our society.

We, of Byron Shire Council proclaim our support for Marriage Equality.

It's time for legislation to support Marriage Equality.

