

Students call on Government to immediately legislate for same sex marriage

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Western Australia's peak student body Curtin Student Guild has called on the Federal Government to immediately introduce legislation to legalise same sex marriage following the emphatic yes victory in the national survey.

According to Curtin Student Guild President, Liam O'Neill, the message from voters has left no doubt that immediate reform is required to ensure equality for all Australians.

"The explicit ban on same-sex marriage in the Marriage Act 1961 discriminates against a section of our community and Australians have now acknowledged that is not acceptable," he said.

"Twenty six countries have legislated for marriage equality, now it is Australia's turn."

Mr O'Neill said that Curtin Student Guild campaigned extensively for the yes vote as part of its commitment to equal rights.

"I am proud of the Curtin Student Guild's truly positive campaign. We didn't engage in dog whistle politics. We shared a powerful message, a message of equality and inclusiveness.

"We coordinated phone banks, collected students' votes and dropped them off in the nearest post box, reached out on social media and succeeded in enrolling a great many to vote through this campaign."

Mr O'Neill said he was heartened that so many Australians representing 79.5% of voters returned their surveys – a higher response rate than in the last US Presidential election, Ireland's same-sex marriage referendum and the Brexit poll.

According to Mr O'Neill, today's result shows the importance of young people engaging in politics, proving we can create change.

"As the final parliamentary sitting day for the year is December 7 we are urging the Government to act now," said Mr O'Neill.

"There cannot be any loopholes or watering down of the anti-discrimination laws on the grounds of religious beliefs. When wedding cakes are ordered – and there will be many - no baker must be able to discriminate against a Queer person."

Mr O'Neill said that the highly charged atmosphere of the same sex marriage campaign had impacted Curtin's Queer community with some students experiencing heightened anxiety.

"The fall-out from the survey was very negative and now it is important to move forward quickly," he said.

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