

# Ettalong Baptist Church

## Policy of Acceptance

Revised and Adopted 27/05/2018

At Ettalong Baptist Church, we love and care for all people from all walks of life: people with various beliefs, ethics, perspectives and lifestyles.

We desire to live as Jesus Christ lived, who loved all people, and spent time with them, eating and drinking with them. We care that humanity, and some within the Christian church, can be quick to alienate and ostracise others who are different from them: those who have different beliefs and lifestyles and who think or speak differently.

**Ettalong Baptist Church welcomes ALL people, but does not affirm all lifestyles.** We love and accept people on a personal level and we will treat those from the LGBT (*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual*) community with the same embrace we would any other relatives, friends or neighbours. We understand not everyone holds to our beliefs. God created humanity with a free will.

Our standard on all matters is God's Word: the Bible. We believe the Bible teaches, and we hold to Christian beliefs and thought on all things including LGBT lifestyles and Same Sex marriage. We believe God's Word is clear and the writings of the apostle Paul in scripture on the subject of gender and homosexuality are also clear.<sup>1</sup> We do not affirm LGBT lifestyles and because of this we do not knowingly allow people in an actively Same Sex relationship into positions of leadership; either paid or unpaid.

The western world has moved quickly towards Same Sex marriages being legalised; how does that affect us as a church, and how does it affect the various individual members of Ettalong Baptist Church? We, the Pastors, Elders and Ministry Partners of Ettalong Baptist Church, believe we can quite comfortably continue to function within that environment, presuming we are not forced, through legislation, to compromise our own convictions.

We agree with the rites of the Baptist Union of Australia; that the biblical definition of marriage is the union between a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life. Our Pastors may legally only marry couples according to these rites, and we cannot in good conscience allow marriages to take place on our church premises that are not biblically based.

We recognise however, that marriage, according to Australian law, is the union of two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life. Although we do not believe that Same Sex marriage is God honouring, or intended by God in any way, we would still love and accept any Same Sex couple who come to worship with us, just as we know Christ would and demonstrates for us in the Bible.

**Everyone is welcome at Ettalong Baptist Church. So, if you are LGBT you are welcome at Ettalong Baptist Church.** You are welcome to attend, worship with us, and participate as a congregational member with the assurance that you are personally included and accepted within our community. This is our standard for everyone, whether LGBT, straight, married, divorced, single, murderer, prisoner, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, New Age, etc.

If God had wanted to condemn the world He would have sent a condemner. He didn't. God loved the world and wanted to save all its' people, so He sent a Saviour. (John 3:17).

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<sup>1</sup> Passages that help us with this are: the account of Sodom (Genesis 19:1-13), the account of Gibeah (Judges 19), the Levitical texts (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13), the apostle Paul's portrayal of decadent pagan society in his day (Romans 1:18-32), and two lists of sinners that Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:8-11)