

NATIONAL MARRIAGE DAY

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.27 pm]: National Marriage Day will be celebrated this year on Tuesday, 13 August. Much has been said about marriage in recent years and the Stand4Marriage Martin Place Declaration, issued on 3 December 2011, by a large number of community groups is worthy of note. On that day, over 2 000 people gathered in Sydney to encourage parliamentarians to have the courage to uphold marriage as being exclusively between one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

I put on public record that I hold that the marriage relationship is the fundamental building block of our society. I have recently returned from Russia where the communist ideal of abolishing the nuclear family was experimented with and saw the dysfunction that is still causing in that society. I urge every member to uphold the definition of marriage as enshrined in the current federal Marriage Act 1961. Marriage is enshrined in this act because it is more than just a private relationship—it is a social good.

In 2004, a group of United States university professors published a book titled *Twenty-One Reasons: Why Marriage Matters*. The case they make for traditional marriage purely on empirical evidence is compelling—it results in better social outcomes, for marriage partners and any children they produce, than any other relationship. I urge members and the public to support National Marriage Day on Tuesday, 13 August.