

STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION OF SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS

This Statement was made by 1992 Yearly Meeting, under the title Affirmation and Reconciliation

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Aotearoa New Zealand commits itself to be a community of reconciliation, responding to the love of God in equality of participation and service, and recognising the gifts of God in one another. A cornerstone of Quaker belief is that of God in everyone, which makes each person precious, and of value to God, to the planet, and to her or his community.

Our lives are an expression of our individual selves and also of our common humanity. We each have different gifts and different needs. We need to discover, acknowledge and respond to our own and those of other people.

Each individual's journey through life is unique. Some will make this journey alone, others in loving relationships – maybe in marriage or other forms of commitment. We need to ponder our own choices and try to understand the choices of others. Love has many shapes and colours and is not finite. It cannot be measured or defined in terms of sexual orientation.

In Quaker practice we believe that we all are equally called to ministry, through our worship, our daily lives, our service to others and in the activities and celebrations of our meeting. Lesbian and gay Friends have played and will continue to play a significant part in Quaker life, thought and ministry both locally and nationally. Particular gifts are brought to our religious life from the struggle of gay and lesbian Friends, in the face of oppression, to find and express their faith. We need the spiritual gifts which are unique to each individual's personality and experience. We give thanks for all our gifts and service.

We are now called to welcome publicly and explicitly the participation and service of lesbian and gay Friends; to help one another develop loving and equal adult relationships and friendships; to explore ways in which we can, through worship and cherishing, mark the joys and sorrows of one another's relationships and life circumstances; to seek formal ways of recognising a variety of commitments, including gay and lesbian partnerships.

Aotearoa/New Zealand society, in which we all participate, still assumes heterosexual models of personal and family relationships. We need to understand the part we each play in continuing to weave this single-pattern fabric, and to look at ways in which other patterns can be interwoven in order to enrich the whole.