

## PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Gay Lawyers welcome the Government's proposals on Civil Partnership Registration

*London, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2003* - The Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association (LAGLA) welcomes the Government's proposals to create an institution that brings an end to discrimination against same-sex partnerships.

In a detailed response to the Department for Trade and Industry, LAGLA is supportive of the proposals for Civil Partnership Registration that would create a new institution that closely follows the rights and duties of marriage.

LAGLA believes that not only will this bring inestimable benefit to gay and lesbian couples who register their partnership, it will strengthen rather than undermine marriage since every civil partnership will be an endorsement of the principles underlying marriage.

Mr Andrea Woelke, LAGLA Chairman, said, "We welcome the Government's proposals but they have left a number of areas unclear. For example dependants' pensions may be minimal if they are not backdated. This would be grossly unfair because gay men and lesbians have been paying the same pension and national insurance contributions as everyone else."

LAGLA has drawn on its extensive legal expertise to make detailed recommendations on a diverse range of important issues including child welfare, social security benefits, tax (especially capital gains and inheritance tax), pensions, immigration and the impact on expatriates.

The report from LAGLA includes specific recommendations such as allowing registration in hotels and embassies abroad and allowing those religious groups that want to perform ceremonies to do so.

However LAGLA do not believe that the Government's proposals adequately prevent someone being married to one person while being in a registered partnership. "If this area is not addressed, we could have legal threesomes," Andrea Woelke said.

LAGLA recognise that only a minority of same-sex couples will register their partnership. They strongly urge the Government to end discrimination between unmarried opposite-sex couples and unregistered same-sex couples in areas like domestic violence and inheritance claims.

The consultation ends on **30 September** so there is still time for everyone to reply to the Government and support the proposals.

A full copy of the report and recommendations is available at [http://www.lagla.org.uk/files/lagla\\_civil\\_partnership\\_response.pdf](http://www.lagla.org.uk/files/lagla_civil_partnership_response.pdf)

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**For further information including interviews and photographs please contact**

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**About the Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association**

LAGLA has members who are solicitors, barristers, legal academics and judges. LAGLA is not a lobbying organisation but a group of lesbian and gay lawyers who meet for seminars, conference and social events. LAGLA has members with a wide variety of legal specialities and is therefore uniquely placed to respond to the Government's proposals.

More information at [www.lagla.org.uk](http://www.lagla.org.uk)

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