



**PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS**

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***Submission to the Human Rights and  
Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012***

I am presenting this Submission as the mother of a gay son and as the secretary of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Brisbane.

The Federal Government's anti discrimination laws need to be simplified in order that all Australians can easily access their rights when they feel they have been discriminated against or vilified.

The new legislation must fully address discrimination and vilification on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Discrimination and vilification of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI) can be insidious or blatant depending on the environment. It can cause people to remain in the closet for fear of back lash. It can and does cause depression and suicide for those in the LGBTI community who feel trapped and helpless against any form of proper recourse.

LGBTI people don't commit suicide just because they are LGBTI, it's because of the fear of hatred, ostracism and discrimination that may be or is directed at them.

All aspects of the new legislation should apply nationally, to have uniformity between States. All too often legislation applying to those in the LGBTI community is not consistent between States and this is an opportunity to address that.

Furthermore, the new Bill must apply in all social settings, schools (religious or State) and the work place. There should be no exemption for religious groups or churches in the matter of discrimination against LGBTI people.

As the mother of a gay son and as a member of PFLAG Brisbane, I hear of many people who are discriminated against just because of their sexual orientation or gender. This issue does not impact on the rights of others but is hurtful and unnecessary for the individual concerned, may impact on their self esteem and place in society and can result in more serious consequences of self harm or suicide.

Vilification is an area that most certainly needs to be addressed. Free speech is fine, but not at the expense of another person or group's physical and emotional well being.

The lesbian and gay community are still harassed and called names. The new legislation must address this. As heterosexuals we could not imagine have insults hurled at us, just because we are straight.

In the media it is often implied that gay men have no morals, are perverts, deviants, paedophiles and the devil's agents. This is no more true of gay men than it is of heterosexual men. But little is done to prevent the comments from being printed or the perpetrators being called to account in a serious manner in the media or courts.

My final and clear message to the Senate Committee is that Australian society no longer condones discrimination against indigenous, women or migrants or calling them inappropriate names. The new Anti-Discrimination Bill must ensure that all people who identify as LGBTI have the same human rights as all other Australians.

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Secretary PFLAG Brisbane