



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
ADELAIDE, S.A. 5000

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Senators,

I want to raise with you the fact that people can change their minds on the issue of marriage equality and I submit to you that the Australian community through the national debate on this matter has progressively changed its collective minds to one of support for marriage equality.

You will, no doubt, have access to published opinion polls over the last several years that evidence this.

I would like to share with you my own personal story of how close family members can journey from the position of ignorance and abhorrence on the issue to one of overwhelming support and sympathy.

I can recall my grandmother, who raised me from the age of nine, telling me in my teenage years that if she ever found out that I was 'one of them' that she would shoot herself. Fortunately when I told her that I was gay, she did not make good on that threat but I did have to move out of home and subsequently had no contact with her for the next eight years.

My grandmother was born in 1921 and had all the prejudices you could generalise to her generation. Nana over a period of years went on a journey, which saw her change her position to one of acceptance, support and love for my partner and me. She would be a frequent visitor to our home and enjoyed spending time with Leith's parents. She became a firm and ardent supporter of our relationship in her latter years and a fervent advocate for marriage equality. She became a persistent nag about when I would finally ask my partner to marry me.

This says to me that people, through experience, can and do change their minds about marriage for gays and lesbians. My grandmother is an example of someone who would have originally rejected outright the proposition that I had a right to marry the man I love but changed

her position to one where she was incensed at the injustice of the current Australian marriage laws. I submit that Australians are able to go on that same journey and have already done so. Published opinion polls now consistently show that Australians support marriage for gays and lesbians.

It should not be a hard proposition then for the Australian Parliament to embrace a position that would remove discrimination against a sizeable minority of its citizens. There is no public interest in maintaining the discrimination in the Marriage Act.

I ask that you recommend to the Senate that legislation to remove this discrimination from the Marriage Act be supported.

*per* Hon Ian Hunter MLC

30 March 2012