

I am fortunate enough to have found someone with whom I share my life and wish to do so for the rest of my life. We happen to both be female. That fact does not diminish our love, nor does it diminish any other human experience. We, as a couple have fears and hopes and worry about the things any other couple worries about. In fact I'd say we're fairly ordinary. I'd say our friends are fairly ordinary too. Some are married, some are not, some are tired of their jobs, some want to go back to study, some want to start a family, all ordinary parts of life.

We, as ordinary people, wanted to formally make a life long commitment to each other and so invited our friends and family to witness our Civil Partnership ceremony. It was a lovely day. We had a ceremony and photos and a reception with speeches and dancing.

Our M.C. was a Christian and she had no issues with explaining to her children about why two women were dressed in white. The kids just accepted it as ordinary.

But now, when I fill in forms, I have to choose between boxes marked married or de facto. I can't say I'm married, because that's not what the certificate says. I hate to tick de facto; it implies something casual or short term, or just for the moment. This is not what our relationship is. There is no box saying Civil Partnershiped, or Civil Unionised. It wouldn't make sense. It doesn't make sense.

Civil Unions are not the same as marriage. If a colleague asks if I am married, what am I supposed to say? Yes, but not really? No, but kind of? I am not legally wed, but at least I'm decriminalized?

All I want as an ordinary Australian is to be treated the same as anyone else. I want to be able to marry my partner, to tick the box that says "Married".

It is a small thing to most Australians. More than 60% of ordinary Australians actively support same sex marriage. For my partner and I it would not be a small thing to be able to say we are married. It would take away the stigma of being caught somewhere in between.

Your sincerely,

Jan Easter