

Dear Senate Committee,

I fully support the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill (2012), affording GLBTI people extended rights of protection against discrimination in workplaces, healthcare, and all aspects of Australian community life. I recommend that the bill be passed this parliamentary term.

As a young gay man and representative of young gay men in Sydney, I would like to emphasise that this piece of legislation is vital in helping to reduce the stigma, bullying and social isolation that GLBTI youths continue to experience today. This continues to be the cause of poor mental health outcomes for GLBTI youths, who are statistically shown to experience higher rates of suicide and suicidal ideation than the general population, higher rates of drug dependency and abuse, and higher rates of homelessness and depression.

I have personally lost loved ones to suicide. I have personally known friends and partners who've been excommunicated from their families and banished from home. I have personally been homophobically assaulted by bigots, and **ignored** by the Australian police. I am an immigrant who has personally sought a better quality of life in Australia, rather than face criminal prosecution for my sexual orientation back in my home country. I am personally affected by this bill, as we all are.

Regards,
Michael Yates