

Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee Inquiry

into allowing same sex couples to marry

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Legal
and Constitutional Affairs
Email Address: LegCon.Sen@aph.gov.au

Date: 21 February 2012.

To John Murphy Member for Lowe

John, I have written to you before on other subjects...speaking up for those who need our voice to cry out against injustice or cruelty. Now it is my turn to speak up for myself.

My younger Brother chose to marry a beautiful woman way back in 1981. My sister married her partner just to make travelling in the Middle East easier. Now divorced, she chooses not to marry again. I would have married my Partner in 2001 but the law prevents it. So, in 2000, my Mother walked me down the aisle of MCC Sydney, in Petersham, and we met up with Sarah's birth Mother at the front as she walked Sarah down the other aisle. Then, in front of 110 of our Family and Friends, Reverend Greg Smith, our Pastor, performed a Holy Union. We had a reception at the Coronation Club, were showered with gifts and went away on our honeymoon in blissful happiness. In 2001 we bought a house with my folks and live with them still. We all attend MCC Sydney on Sundays and worship together. You might say we are a regular, Christian family...quite traditional in fact. Traditional except that the laws that you uphold prevent us from really being family with all of the rights and the freedom and the acceptance afforded to all other citizens.

Australia is falling behind the rest of the World. One day all society will look back with abhorrence at the way gays, lesbians and transgender people were treated 'way back when' before the laws changed. Remember "black people"? Remember the suffragettes? These battles are part of history now. Let's make this a part of history too and give 'gays' equal rights NOW.

- We are pleased that Australia has recognised same-sex couples as de facto partners but believe it is also important to allow them to make the official, public commitment that marriage involves;
- Excluding gay and lesbian Australians from such an important institution as marriage fosters discrimination more broadly, and deprives them of the same choices and benefits other Australians take for granted;
- Allowing same-sex couples to marry will affirm that marriage is about love, commitment and family, not discrimination;
- More than 60% of Australians support marriage equality and 75% believe it will happen;
- Civil unions do not provide same-sex partners with the same rights, recognition or respect that comes with marriage;
- The dire predictions of the opponents of marriage equality have been proven false by the experience overseas where marriage equality has benefited same-sex couples, their families, marriage and society generally.

Lee & Sarah