

From: Kate Stewart [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 14 April 2005 2:27 PM
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)
Cc: senator@alphalink.com.au
Subject: Inquiry into same sex overseas adoption

To whom it may concern,

I write to express my extreme opposition to John Howard's proposal to ban same-sex couples from adopting children overseas.

This is absurd legislation. Same-sex adoption is already legal in WA, the ACT and Tasmania within Australia. It is my hope that other states, including my own state of Victoria, will follow suit shortly. How ludicrous that we who are in same-sex relationships may adopt children in our own country but cannot adopt from a foreign country. Many countries do not allow same-sex couples to adopt anyway – that's their prerogative, but it would be the height of hypocrisy for our Federal government to stamp its own retrograde ideology on couples who are forced to go that route in their attempts to build a family.

John Howard **MUST** provide solid reasons for this further intrusion upon our human rights. He must provide good evidence that children born or adopted into same-sex headed families suffer disproportionately to those in heterosexual headed families. Of course, he cannot do this, as this evidence does not exist. There are a multitude of studies which have been performed, assessing a range of outcomes for children in 'rainbow' families, over the past 20 years or so...and none have been able to show any significant difference, except that children in gay families are less inclined to discriminate against others.

As there is no evidence apart from his own 'gut feeling', this legislation can only be seen for what it is, discrimination and hatred towards our community. Will he only be happy when gay people join asylum-seekers in desert prisons, deprived of all liberties that heterosexual people take for granted? Should we be asking where his hatred for us will end?

Please note, that this legislation will in no way prevent gay people from reproducing themselves. The vast majority of us don't need overseas adoption to form families. It will impact upon gay male couples disproportionately, however, as they need generally need surrogacy and then adoption to become parents, options not available in Australia to anyone.

My partner and I plan to start a family in a couple of years. As second-parent adoption by a same sex partner is not legal in Victoria, we will travel to Canberra to have the baby, so that our child may have the protection of both parents on the birth certificate. You see – we want what is best for our kids, same as anyone does. By preventing our children from having the same legal protections as other children, you won't stop lesbians from becoming pregnant but you will hurt us and our kids – and for what?

Dr. Kate Stewart
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