

Inquiry into administration and operation of the Migration Act 1958

Submission to the Senate legal and Constitution Committee of the Parliament of Australia.

GLITF (Gay & Lesbian Immigration Task Force) is a non profit organisation dedicated to helping Gay and Lesbian Australians bring their partner to Australia with Permanent Residency Status. Relationships have no limits, we spend our whole lives as living proof of this in a heterosexual world! Not only is love not limited by gender, love is not limited by culture or International borders.

We provide free immigration advice to Gay and Lesbian couples from a Registered Migration Agent. There is a GLITF in every State of Australia, NSW GLITF has been operating for 22years.

Whilst we have no discrimination in the "Partner" visa, using visa subclass's 310/110 and 826/814, the Gay and Lesbian community suffer an enormous amount of discrimination in other available visa's. This discrimination has a much wider effect on the community especially rural ones with shortages of desperately needed skills.

The Federal Minister for Immigration Amanda Vanstone, confirmed to us that immigration policies which discriminate against same-sex couples will Not be changed.

Highly skilled medical practitioners wanting to migrate to Australia to work in desperately understaffed hospitals have been stymied in their application because DIMIA (read the Howard Govt) won't allow her to approve the changes needed. Several submissions including from GLITF and MIA have been made and were on Amanda's desk for many months.

The Govt's refusal to recognise same-sex relationships is resulting in highly sought after Doctors and mental health specialists (and do we need them) just ask Peter Beattie, Cornelia Rau, NSW and S.A State Govt's) these desperately needed specialists are going to New Zealand and Canada instead of Australia because they do not discriminate.

Despite State and Territory Govt's now legally recognising same-sex couples, the Commonwealth has refused to do so, resulting in a raft of discrimination that is disrupting public policy and harming communities.

It's high time the Federal Govt introduced a scheme of Civil Unions for same-sex couples, in much the same way as already exists in the UK and New Zealand. This would allow the much needed change to be made in Schedule 2. Thus the desperately needed change in Schedule 2 could be made, whilst we are not considered "family" by this Govt we cannot bring our partners as Secondary applicants on Skills visas and therefore Australia misses out on much needed skills. Especially rural areas.

The Federal Govt must drag itself into the 21st Century, recognise long-term relationships between same-sex couples and provide legal certainty for them. More and more overseas countries have legislation for same-sex marriage/civil unions, Canada, Spain, UK, NZ and Switzerland. We prefer to call it a Civil Union.

Following the case of 2 gay psychiatrists being prevented from relocating their partners on equal visas to Australia in April this year we now have DIMIA (read this pathetic Govt who obviously don't give a dam about rural areas) refusing a British GP's same sex partner an adequate visa. All these doctors were to work in areas where there were crucial shortages of medical services. It was heartening to have the President of the AMA speaking out publically against this inequality in our Immigration laws. We, as members of the gay community, are aware of how discrimination hurts the targeted individuals. It is often over-looked how discrimination hurts

the wider community. In these cases the loss will be felt by rural areas with shortages of doctors.

This is another example of how discrimination prevents people from minorities contributing their full talents and gifts to the community. We desperately seek the small change needed in Schedule 2 which will allow a same-sex secondary applicants on especially Skills and Business visa applications.

From: Trevor W Robinson JP; Migration Agent
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