

**SUBMISSION OF MARTIN SOBEY TO THE INQUIRY OF THE SENATE
LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INTO:**

Evidence Amendment Bill 2008

I submit that the community is ready to go (and ought to go) beyond the prejudice that sees same-sex sexual relationships as different in essence or legal value from opposite-sex sexual relationships. As a result I submit that it is appropriate to treat such same-sex relationships in this Bill as recommended by the HREOC and/or proposed by the Government and not in a category with the committed relationships of unmarried sisters, for example, as the Opposition has recently suggested may be appropriate. As long as marriage is not available to same-sex couples and exemptions from giving evidence continue for spouses, exemptions should apply equally to de facto same-sex conjugal spousal partners.

There is no relevant scientifically tested evidence of any valid reason for the differentiation apparently preferred by the Opposition while there certainly *is* evidence of the harm caused by such unwarranted discrimination. I write as a former supporter of the now-Opposition.

Thank you for your attention to this submission.

Martin Sobey