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Senate Committee

Same Sex Marriage Inquiry

The John Howard led Coalition Government imposed a Radical Religious Right position on the people of Australia. The restrictions on recognition of same sex marriages are unsupported and unsupportable as matters of human rights and science.

There is no evidence that recognition of marriages between people of the same sex damages other kinds of marriages. The traditionalist's position that marriage is and only can be between a man and a woman is based on religious prejudices and biases. Boswell's research into same sex marriage clearly indicates that these restrictions on marriage are relatively recent in the history of man.

It is relatively clear that there are those in the government who will do everything that they can to prevent any recognition of basic human rights for homosexuals. Senators Abetz and Heffernan are particularly virulent in their opposition to 'gay rights'. Discrimination and bias are not the exclusive property of the Conservative Coalition. There are more than a few in the ALP who also oppose recognition of rights for same sex attracted people.

Various State jurisdictions in Australia have begun to recognise same sex relationships in some ways. Some States purport to give equal relationship rights to same sex couples at law. Nevertheless, marriage is denied same sex couples solely based on religious biases and appeals to authority. Selective translations of Scripture and intentional misstatements of other documents are used to support continuing biases and prejudices by other self appointed 'experts'.

The Federal Government has chosen to recognise same sex relationships when it is convenient for matters of finance expediency and control. At the same time, same sex couples in committed long term relationships are denied access to services, grants, and awards that would be viewed as a right of opposite sex couples. Access to the Family Courts, provision of IVF to lesbian women, couple adoption rights, access to pensions and health care and health care access and decision making are reserved for opposite sex couples. Discriminations abound even though States like NSW have made legitimate attempts to remove discrimination against homosexuals in the laws and policies of the State.

Refusal to recognise the basic human rights of all the people diminishes all of us. Those of us who identify as homosexuals must have equal rights and access to social justice that is not diminished because of our sexual attractions, orientations, or preferences. Refusal to recognise the existence and right of 'alternative' sexualities imposes a right v wrong dichotomy on a non-dichotomous dimension ... it would be clear to those familiar with Kinsey's research that sexuality and sexual orientations are distributed across a dimension anchored by complete heterosexuality and complete homosexual attractions and conduct. Just because most humans are oriented toward the heterosexual end of the continuum does not make those at the homosexual end of the continuum wrong, deviant, or abnormal. Commonality does not prove 'normality' ... all commonality illustrates is that there are more at one end of the continuum than at the other.

The Federal Government has decided through the Pensions system to treat same sex couples in the same way as married couples. To make it worse the change in pensions and allowance was made with no transitions. As an older male, I have many friends in the gay / homosexual communities who are badly damaged and effected by these changes. To say that the current actions are discriminatory is an understatement. The actions are defended in the name of equality and egalitarianism. True equality would minimally grant equal relationship status before instituting penalties on people.

It wasn't that many years ago that Australia treated its Aboriginal residents as non-people. Churches supported slavery and indentures. Churches prohibited inter-racial marriage and in many cases did not allow non-white people to worship their deity ... all this shows is that people can change.

We know that the younger people in Australia support equal rights for homosexuals. Those rights include the right to marry, the right to adopt children and the right to be allowed to exist just as any other law-abiding citizen of Australia. Now is the time to change the outdated and illogical marriage laws. Do it now, not later.

Submitted by,
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