

TO THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

I am nineteen years old, and last October I voted for the first time in my life. Whilst the process of voting itself was simple and somewhat mundane, I have come to realise the significance that my one vote has.

Each of us has one vote. Only one. The power that it gives us and its influence on our government is entirely equal. A vote transcends wealth, age, gender, social status, occupation, ability or ethnicity. My vote is just as valid as my friends, my family, my neighbours and my colleagues.

If I voted, why should I not be considered equal? If my opinion should carry a message that is just as strong as any other, why should I be discriminated against? Why should I not be extended the same rights as my heterosexual peers? If they are able to marry the people they love, why shouldn't I?

The ban on same-sex marriage is discriminatory to its core. In no other aspect of my life do I face such inequity as this. To say that my love for another is not as valid as that of a heterosexual person is shameful. Yet we, the LGBTI community, are the ones who wear this shame on a daily basis. It is time the Australian government pulled its head out of the past and listened to the voice of its people.

I know that I am only young. The prospect of marriage seems a lifetime away. Yet should I choose to one day exchange vows and rings with the man I love, my government should not stand in my way.

I vote. I am equal. Please recognise my equality and end the ban on same-sex marriage.

Yours sincerely,

Rob McDonald