

27 August 2009

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

This is my submission to the inquiry into marriage equality.

I endorse the submissions made by Australian Marriage Equality, the Law Institute of Victoria, the LGBTI NACLIC working group, the VGLRL and ALSO foundation, the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council and the Queer Muslims in Australia group in favour of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

From the outset, I must state that this is a personal submission, albeit I am involved in many organisations and committees in the legal and community sectors.

My partner and I have been together for four years. We are in the process of having our first child. We got 'registered' in \_\_\_\_\_ earlier this year and have a certificate which cost more than a marriage certificate but looks the same, however there was no ceremony - no chance for a celebrant, no real societal recognition.

On the one hand, I am glad we live in \_\_\_\_\_ where we can register our relationship but it means nothing if we move to another state. This farcical 'border patrol' further brings home the entrenched discrimination that we, a same sex couple continue to experience as ordinary, tax paying, employed citizens starting a new family.

Why is this so hard?

Why in a country that claims 'a fair go' for all and believes in equality are we still battling for it?

We fail on an international sphere when we compare ourselves. The religious right who scream this will destroy the sanctity of marriage make for ludicrous arguments, marriage is not a religious sacrament in Australia and if we look overseas - Spain, a Catholic country did not disappear when they started marrying same sex couples.

As a future parent, I want to protect my children. I worry that they will suffer unduly because they will grow up in a world which believes their parents love is less worthy than the heterosexual couples they will meet - who are just as committed as we are.

I hope this Inquiry brings about change.

Regards,

Alyena Mohummadally