

In 1997, when I 'came out' to my parents, it was not just me standing there telling them that I was gay. It was also saying to them that; I may or may not have children, at the moment I'm not allowed (by my Government) to get married, and that instead of referring to me in the future as Mr and Mrs it would be Mr and Mr. It wasn't just telling them three small words (I am gay), there had been at least twelve months of my own (inner) heartache and thinking, about realizing it for myself, how I was going to tell friends and family, especially my parents and how things would change for me.

However, like all adult teenagers at the time, I had a normal upbringing and normal experiences. I went to and graduated from College, had a part time job, and then went on to University. I've since graduated several times from University with several degrees, of which I have fully paid back my HECS. I worked the entire time in the Commonwealth Government whilst putting myself through University. I was just like everyone else in the same situation. The only difference being, that compared to a heterosexual male, being homosexual my love is reserved for other men.

I don't promote my homosexuality, I'm just me. I study, I work, I pay my taxes and I vote. In the past I have been a Liberal/National, Labor, Democrats and Greens supporter. I vote for the party that supports me. I believe that as an Australian, no, as a Human-Being, that we are all created equal. It is the elected Government who places the restrictions and prejudices on us.

Therefore, at present, my elected Government views that the love that I share for another Human-Being, cannot be sanctified under the laws of marriage. I think Disney© says it best "When you wish upon a star, makes no difference who you are...". So what does it matter what I do in the 'bedroom' to how I live my life as an Australian? It doesn't. There are no changes in the way I study, work, and pay my taxes. The only difference is that I'm not allowed to get married to the person I love.

I urge the committee to consider the 'real' reasons why same-sex marriage is not allowed in this country and the reasons why the elected Government is prejudicing a group of people who are: ambitious, caring, committed, compassionate, dedicated, determined, diverse, generous, hard working, honest, inspirational, loving, loyal, optimistic, patient, respectful, responsible, skilled, special, strong, trusting and unique. All the same qualities you would expect from any Australian.

By removing all discrimination from the Marriage Act 1961 on the basis of sexuality and gender identity and to permit marriage regardless of sex, sexuality and gender identity, you will be making Australia a truly equal place to live.