

Committee Secretary, Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600Australia

Dear Sir/Madam:

Submission for same sex marriage equality

Our elected leader has recently given a long overdue apology to the aboriginal people of our country. He 'reflected on their past mistreatment', and hoped that issuing an apology would 'right the wrongs of the past' and allow us to move forward as a united nation.

This apology was an election promise made to a nation that voted in favour of a political party that promised social reform, and, in my humble opinion, was one of the most exciting political events of my adult life, the first time I have ever seen my vote being used the way I had hoped it would be.

While this speech refers to the physical removal of Aboriginal people from their homes, our country's mistreatment of its Aboriginal peoples included the prohibition of marriage of female Aborigines without the authorisation of a Protector (Kennedy and Nance, 1996). This shameful past is being echoed in the treatment of the homosexual members of our society.

We look at the acts of our ancestors with a sense of shame and embarrassment. I ask you now not to give our children reason to feel the same remorse. This backward and dated law must be removed, for the following reasons:

Denying them is a violation of religious freedom (civil and religious marriages are two separate institutions).

Marriage benefits (such as joint ownership, medical decision-making capacity) should be available to all couples.

Homosexuality is an accepted lifestyle nowadays.

Denying these marriages is a form of minority discrimination.

It doesn't hurt society or anyone in particular.

The only thing that should matter in marriage is love.

It encourages people to have strong family values and give up high-risk sexual lifestyles, contrary to many arguments against gay marriage.

Please consider this submission when inquiring into this matter.

Regards,

Georgia McMullan.