

## Submission to the Marriage Equality enquiry

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

I would like to urge you to endorse complete equality in marriage for all, with same-sex marriages having exactly the same status as marriages between men and women.

As a now middle-aged man who grew up in an era when society met homosexuality with suppression and silence, I experienced an environment of hostility which held back my development as a human being and my potential for happiness.

This is the twenty-first century, and society has progressed. We now understand that historical errors must be acknowledged and reversed.

It is intolerable that young gays and lesbians today should have to face the least vestige of the prejudice and active discrimination which I suffered. Nothing less than total equality is acceptable.

Same-sex marriage does not threaten marriage between men and women in any way. In fact, extending marriage to same-sex couples will strengthen it. Rights and freedoms are deepened by being universal, and belittled by limitations or exceptions. It is time for everyone to understand that one does not validate oneself by restricting the freedoms of others.

It is crucial to the struggle against the homophobia which still persists that the Australian people through their government should publicly affirm the value of gay and lesbian people as full members of society by extending complete equality of marriage rights to them.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Richardson

28 August 2009