

Giovanni Campolo

To Senate Committee Submissions

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Sydney, 28 August 2009

Re: SUBMISSION for "Inquiry into the provisions of the Marriage Legislation Amendment Bill 2009"

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco.

I am Italian born and proud to be an Australian citizen.

I would like to make a submission to the "Inquiry into the provisions of the Marriage Legislation Amendment Bill 2009" in order to express my support to the removal of any discrimination from our legal system.

In 2004 the Howard's government amended the Marriage Act to confirm in law what was already discrimination in practice. Further below is my submission at the time to a Senate Enquiry which was quashed by the change in law before it could start work.

There is plenty of statistic evidence about the existence of solid gay families, many now having the courage of taking on that parenthood that society (wrongly) deemed them not fit for. I express my views on the matter in the former submission further below.

But in this occasion I would like to remind the Commission that we live in a secular society and it's time to stir away from moral and religious beliefs that refuse to accept that individuals are individuals: we all must have the same rights.

Marriage must be a commitment of two individuals in front of society, with all its advantages and its responsibilities. It must have nothing to do with religion.

If the current term Marriage is untouchable, then we need a new no gender-based Marriage (I won't go in the semantics of a suitable word) that applies to everyone. No matter if you choose to marry in a church or under an UFO, your religious beliefs and marriage commitments in that scenario should not have a value in front of the law. The only Marriage that would legally count would only be a 'secular' one, to be registered at the relevant institution, as determined by law.

My partner and I are committed and ready for parenthood. We want make sure that our offsprings will not be discriminated in any way by laws that would consider their family a second class arrangement.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.

Kind Regards
Giovanni

Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco

Sydney, 28 July 2004

Re: SUBMISSION for "Inquiry into the provisions of the Marriage Legislation Amendment Bill 2004"

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco.

I am Italian born and am now proud to be an Australian citizen.

I would like to make a submission to the "Inquiry into the provisions of the Marriage Legislation Amendment Bill 2004" in order to express my opposition to any attempt of introducing discriminatory legislation to our legal system.

Six years ago this country did an extraordinary thing that very few countries in the world were doing at the time. It gave to my Australian partner and I a chance for our now eight year old same sex relationship the possibility to be tested and grow. I was allowed to move to Australia on an "interdependent relationship" and we could follow our hearts.

Since then our relationship has grown into a family unit supported by families and friends, just the same way as any heterosexual relationship. We were given the chance of being happier people who have been able to contribute to our society, community and economy as much and possibly more than many people.

Yet, our "interdependent relationship" (what an ugly and sterile name that is) is effectively considered "inferior" by law and isn't supported by the same rights as a heterosexual relationship even though we are required to pay the same taxes and live under the same laws that support our heterosexual friends.

If some people had their ways, our "family" wouldn't have ever happened.

We wouldn't have had the chance of investing in our relationship and making the contribution we are making to Australia. Only because we didn't fit the stereotypical idea that only weddings between a man and a woman can keep this country going and save it from 'doom'...

There will always be more straight people than gay people; there will always be new born to this country. Claiming that recognising gay marriage will hurt society is utterly ridiculous.

I believe that introducing discrimination in the Marriage Act 1961 and Family Law Act 1975 will have negative effects because homosexual people who are part of this society's core structure may be prevented from making the contribution they can potentially make and are already making.

I know many gay and lesbian people who are fantastic parents of very happy children. I know brilliant teachers who happen to be gay and are actively contributing to the formation of the new generations, sometimes more than the actual parents.

I know plenty of people who just happen to be homosexuals and who don't need to make a big deal out of it because they just want to be integrated in the society they live in, as long as they are not rejected and discriminated by it.

However, conservative people don't seem to see the good in this and don't foresee that introducing discrimination would sabotage the very idea of democracy. There cannot be real democracy if some people are more "equal" than others.

If homosexual couples want to make the public commitment of getting married, they should be allowed to do so. Legal obligations aside, isn't the act marriage simply a public commitment in front of society?

After all, many heterosexual people make totally dependable partners and fantastic parents without being married. It's not the act of marrying in itself that makes a successful couple. However, marriage has an important value in our society and loving and committed homosexual couples must have the right to make such public commitment if they wish to do so.

Homophobic people have to open their eyes and face their own fears without taking them onto others.

People in society should not be rewarded or penalise on the base of their sexual/emotional orientation. It seems that some dysfunctional married heterosexual couples choosing to live off the dole and throwing equally dysfunctional kids into this world have more rights than extraordinary people like Justice Michael Kirby and his supportive partner. This is totally paradoxical.

Homosexual people have the potential to be as good or as bad partners and parents as heterosexual people can. I dare to say that probably homosexuals would try harder to be better partners and parents because they would make that choice out of a strong will and not just because that is what society 'expects' from them; which seem to be the drive behind many short lived heterosexual unions.

This is Australia; this is the country of the "fair go".

Please make sure that no legislation introduces further discrimination of any kind.

Regards