

**To the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee**

**Re: Inquiry into Marriage Equality**

This is my submission to the senate committee's inquiry into marriage equality. I am writing in favour of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

Unfortunately, my submission may be different to others. I have no personal anecdotes of myself, friends or families suffering at the previous Federal Government's insistence on banning same sex marriages.

What I do have is a recognised legal marriage and an anecdote of how this marriage brings me and my partner the happiness, strength, security, social recognition and opportunities that we were only able to feel after our marriage. What I do have is the sense of right and wrong that I am confident that is in the spirit of the Australian law, that we afford all of our people their rights to equality, personal freedom and choice in such important and life-changing such as the matter of who we choose to be our partner in life and how that choice is respected by other people and the law.

Marriage may not mean the same thing to other people as it means to me. But what I do believe is that it is not up to other people to decide whether marriage is for anyone other than them and their partners. My choice to marriage is insulted and violated by the fact that we withhold this very same choice to the people in same-sex relationships, by the fact that we are not equal and that others are discriminated in such shameful manner. Although I have been allowed to marry the person of my choice, the legalisation of my marriage will continue to be a joke if this very same right is withheld unfairly to others who may not have the same preferences as I do.

As an atheist, I also feel that my religious freedom is violated by a religious-driven agenda to restrict marriages to opposite-sex couples. Those are not my religions. My freedom of religion is restricted by the fact that we continue to pass laws based on these agenda.

Please let the couples decide for themselves what their marriages mean to them and not by some people's misguided prejudice and sense of unfairness.

Kanatcha Sakdiset

28 August 2009