

28 August 2009

SUBMISSION ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY

I support same-sex marriage.

I am a 29 year-old male from [redacted] with a male partner. We have been together for 11 years after meeting at high school and are deeply committed to each other. We own an apartment together, share bank accounts and I have traveled with his family to the Philippines (where he was born and raised) to meet his extended family. Our families treat us the same as our siblings who are married.

We have been in a committed relationship longer by far than any of our friends or siblings, and yet cannot legally marry as many of them have done. At the many weddings we have attended, we receive looks of pity and embarrassment from our friends and family as the celebrant mandatorily declares that “marriage is between a man and a woman” as all present recognise that our country treats us as second-class citizens.

The institution of marriage has, in the past, precluded marriage between two persons of a different race, and has allowed the husband to legally beat his wife with a stick of a diameter less than that of his thumb. Discrimination on the basis of race or gender has been seen as a fundamental part of the institution of marriage in the past, but we as a society decided that such discrimination was unacceptable.

The ban on same-sex marriage and the argument that marriage is fundamentally between a man and a woman is exactly the same – being discrimination based on inherent human characteristics. Homosexuality is no more a “lifestyle choice” than race or gender is a lifestyle choice.

The only fundamental aspects of marriage are love and life-long commitment.

Timothy Dangerfield