

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

My name is Anthony Cronin and this is my personal submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

I urge you to remove discrimination in civil marriage laws on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. I say this as a father of a same-sex attracted daughter, who wants his child to have the rights she is entitled to under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Not only does my daughter face discrimination because of these unfair laws, but a number of my friends and members of my family also do. Although they are in healthy, loving relationships they are denied the same formal and legal recognition afforded to heterosexual couples.

My daughter and her partner recently traveled to Canada to wed.

When she told me the news that they were engaged, I was thrilled. However, I did not expect that they would travel halfway across the world to marry. I assumed that they would have a commitment ceremony here in _____ so that all the family could attend. When I asked her why she had decided to travel to Canada she said, "Well dad, it is important to me to have a proper wedding. I want people to take this seriously. I don't want to be a second-class citizen, I want my love to be legally recognised. I don't feel that make shift versions of a wedding are acceptable. Why should our commitment to one another be any different to that of my straight cousins?" It was after having this conversation with my daughter that I realised just how right she was and that Australia's laws needed to change.

I was lucky enough to be able to travel over to Canada for the wedding. It was a very proud day for me. Although I spent more time flying there and back than I did in Canada (I could only stay for the day of the wedding as I had to be back a work), I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Notwithstanding this, I wish that their marriage could have been here on Australian soil so that all of our family could have been there to share their special day.

Not only does Australia need to recognise the marriages of same-sex couples legally entered into overseas in such countries as Canada, Spain and South Africa, but they also need to allow same-sex marriage in Australia,

I want to see this legislation changed. I want to see discrimination on the basis of sexuality and gender identity removed from the Marriage Act 1961 and introduction of legislation to permit marriage regardless of sex, sexuality and gender identity.

In addition to my personal submission, I fully endorse the submissions made by Amnesty International Australia and Australian Marriage Equality in favour of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

Anthony Cronin