

I am a gay man and have been in a same sex relationship for 16 years. In fact, as a 50 year old man, this has been my only relationship.

As a member of the Gay community, I feel very strongly that Australian law discriminates against me and my community in not allowing us to enter into formal relationships on the same basis as the heterosexual community. The issue of formal recognition of gay relationships will continue to be debated and divide the community until society values all relationships similarly, regardless of sexuality. This is not an issue that is going to go away. The phenomenon of gay men and women coming out to their family, friends, employers, work colleagues, and community was unique in widening the audience of Australian citizens who see the current laws as unjust, not from just the gay community but also from potentially every person who knows a gay person. I believe that this is why the Australian society has progressively moved to accepting gay marriage as an equitable concept and expecting legislators to remove this form of discrimination.

All of the arguments I have seen against the legal recognition of gay relationships can be refuted, are unfounded, or are totally patronising. At a simple personal level, my argument is that Australian society has no basis to say that my relationship with my partner is any less than the relationship of a heterosexual couple. The laws are unjust and discriminate against us in not allowing us to express our relationship in a formal sense, in exactly the same way as any other Australian couple and, in fact, in exactly the same way as any of our siblings are able to do.