

I have been living with my same-sex partner for 13 years. In 2007 we travelled to Canada to be married there – an option denied us in our own country. To both of us it seems inequitable that recent changes to the definition of marriage by the Howard government instituted positive discrimination against gay people, denying them equal rights with heterosexual couples.

Both I and my husband have been previously married to women and between us we have 6 adult children. We both believe marriage is an important institution in our society, especially my husband (an ex-priest who has conducted many marriage services himself) In fact one stimulus to our going to Canada to be married was a comment from one son (living in a heterosexual de facto relationship) that “marriage didn’t matter”. We both feel strongly that it does. It declares to our friends and family that we are in a permanent loving relationship and we certainly feel as married to each other now as we were to our wives previously.

I recognise that not all gay people believe marriage is important for them, but there are a substantial number who do. It should not be necessary for Australian citizens who feel this way to pay for expensive (and greenhouse gas producing) overseas travel to attain what other Commonwealth gay citizens can enjoy: full equality.

It is time to end this demeaning discrimination.

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