

Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009

Committee Secretary

Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee

Dear Members of the Committee,

I would like to make a submission supporting the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

I make this submission to your inquiry as a 30 year old heterosexual male who has now been married for over 5 years. The day my wife and I were married was one of the proudest and most important days of my life. The commitment that we made to each other I take extremely seriously and the vows I made I intend to honour for the rest of my life. So please believe me when I say the word 'marriage' is not one I use lightly.

We were not married in a church. I have yet to be convinced one way or the other on whether or not there is a higher power. We were married by a Civil Celebrant in a lovely little ceremony in Melbourne. Does God recognise our union? I'm not sure. I'll worry about that after I figure out whether he exists or not. But I am sure that the law recognises our union. We have a government issued marriage certificate to prove it.

Another thing I am certain about is this. Having been through a marriage ceremony I have the right to tell all and sundry that we are married. That means a lot to me. Language is a funny thing. The specific meaning of words often changes over time. For example, the Queen still bestows knighthoods, but I haven't seen too many of these modern knights jousting lately. Likewise, the word 'gay' hasn't always meant what we think it to mean now. But if someone attempted to legislate what they consider to be the correct usage of the word 'gay' I'd like to think they would be dismissed as being ridiculous. Marriage, to me, is a promise made between two people who are in love. As long as the two people are of sound mind and aren't breaking any laws I really don't see why anyone would oppose it.

Law is perhaps the most interesting part of this whole issue. As a general rule, I think it would be fair to say we don't remove or reduce a person's rights in this country unless they have in some way breached the law. Yet the rights and recognition that my wife and I receive as a married couple are not shared by other couples who are in every way comparable to us, except for the small fact that they happen to be of the same gender.

A great many wrongs have been corrected in the last hundred years. Most young

people can't even imagine a time when women were not allowed to vote in this country, or when aboriginal people were classed as fauna. I sincerely believe that in 10 years time the phrase, 'Marriage is only the union between a man and a woman,' will be considered equally as repugnant as, 'a woman's place is in the kitchen.'

I make this submission not as a gay person, or even someone who has many gay friends. I make this submission as person who believes that legislated discrimination is wrong and that the law should support all of its citizens, not just the heterosexual ones. I sincerely hope the committee and the parliament will exercise some common sense over this issue; which in this day and age should not even be an issue at all.

I thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Brett Lambden