

Dear Committee Members

We currently have a law that blatantly discriminates against fellow members of our society. This is NOT ACCEPTABLE.

I don't understand why this injustice hasn't been rectified sooner. People seem to get so emotive about the word 'marriage' and its meaning in a religious context (something between a man and woman). I am not a particularly religious person, because of this my husband and I chose to have a wedding conducted by a civil celebrant with no religious content. Our union is recognised in society legally and I refer to myself as a married person.

I've never heard anyone suggest that my marriage is different to those conducted in a church or that I should not have the same legal rights as church married people. It's interesting that the sanctity of 'marriage' argument only comes up with regard to Gay and Lesbian couples.

Getting married was a really important step in my relationship enabling myself and my partner to show our commitment to each other and strengthen our relationship. Gay, lesbian and transgender people; as equal, accepted and contributing members of our society must be given the same respect and rights that my husband and I have benefitted from.

It would be extremely hypocritical, for those with the power to change the law, to vote against marriage equality. The government has recently recognised same-sex couples for tax and other purposes. In the past this was an inequality in society which has been rectified. The government recognised that same-sex couples have certain obligations. I feel that this action by the government legitimises and shows that Australian society accepts same-sex and transgender relationships. Given this, the government now has its own obligation to provide equitable treatment with regards to marriage.

I have a huge concern that if this Bill is not passed this time, that it will be another generation before we have equality in this area. Withholding equality in marriage will be viewed by me and many others as a form of homophobia, it has no place in our Parliament, and it has no place in our society.

Perhaps some people wonder why as a heterosexual person I feel the need to write a submission to this inquiry. I do know people to whom this amendment would mean a great deal, however I haven't done this only for them. I have made this submission because I am human, I can see there is a group of people in our society who are being unfairly discriminated against and it has to stop.

This Bill does not request special treatment; it does not request anything unreasonable or something that could harm anyone. It just requests a 'fair go' for all Australians, how can any Australian possibly vote against that.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important Bill.