

I am an Australian and I believe in giving everyone a fair go and treating everyone with the same respect, we are a Country that is full of different nationalities, people from everyone corner of this earth, we welcome them with open arms and give them the opportunity to be a part of this 'lucky Country'.

We all know the difference between right and wrong, defying a group of people from the same rights as everyone else is wrong. We have seen our Government apologise in the past for atrocities to the stolen generation, all I am asking is for all people to be treated the same.

A marriage certificate allows same-sex partners to prove their relationship status if challenged. This contrasts with defacto couples who must prove they fit a range of criteria before their legal rights are secure. This is particularly important in emergency situations. It is also important for same-sex partners because continued prejudice against same-sex relationships can lead to a denial of rights.

Same-sex partners are not equal under the law, or in the eyes of society, if they cannot marry. The *Marriage Act* continues to enshrine and foster discrimination against same-sex partners as long as it prohibits same-sex marriage. Opposite-sex partners have a choice of marrying or remaining defacto partners, a choice not open to same-sex partners.

Married partners have immediate access to all relationship rights, entitlements, protections and responsibilities. This contrasts with defacto couples who must cohabit for a certain period before they have rights and protections.

Denying same-sex partners the right to marry sends out the message that these partners are not capable of the love and commitment that is often associated with marriage.

All I want to do is to be proud to that as an Australian, my Government treats everyone with the same respect and gives all people the same opportunities.