

August 18 2009

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

This is my submission to your inquiry into marriage equality. I fully endorse the submission made by Australian Marriage Equality in favour of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

On Australia's coat of arms, the Kangaroo and Emu both appear. These animals were chosen to 'symbolise a nation moving forward, reflecting a common belief that neither animal can move backwards easily'¹. However we are not moving forward on the issue of marriage equality. The Marriage Amendment Act 2004 under the Howard government was a very large step backwards.

Marriage is a choice that is available to heterosexual couples. They can choose to live in a de facto relationship, or they can choose to marry. Homosexual couples don't have that choice. This is discrimination plain and simple. I appreciate the recent reforms to remove same sex discrimination from Commonwealth law, but discrimination still exists in the Marriage Act. The Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 can rectify this.

My partner and I have been together for 6 years. Our relationship deserves the same recognition that a married heterosexual couple has. As Australian's we acknowledge the concept of mateship as an important part of our cultural identity, but where is our fair go when it comes to marriage equality. Let's embrace that idea of a nation moving forward. Let's 'Advance Australia Fair'.

Brett Smith

¹http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/coat_of_arms.html