

30 July 2009

**RE: Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009**

To Whom It May Concern

My family consists of Mum, Dad, my sister and myself. I was born in \_\_\_\_\_ and as long as I can remember I have always been gay. I remember having a crush on a boy in Year 5. My sister is also a lesbian.

As a child I loved my country, I believe that it was the best place in the world, so special and so isolated being surrounded by water, it gave us an unprecedented amount of freedom to be ourselves. I had always been different at school, at first I thought it was my intelligence or I wouldn't blindly succumb to peer pressure and force myself to think for myself before acting not just follow people like sheep. I worked hard at being the best I can be.

While going through school I always believed I would get married and have several children. I had always been the one that looked after my younger sister, my young cousins, taking them to the movies, the beach we loved it. My job was on carnival rides looking after children all day. I would receive much feedback that one day I would be a great father from customers, family and friends.

While going through my teenage years I never come to terms with my homosexuality nor met a person openly gay. I felt completely alone. I loathed these feelings, not because I thought being gay was bad, but because I believed I was the ONLY one. I wouldn't even touch alcohol fearing my true feelings would surface. I remember being depressed and suicidal.

I remember the first time seeing two guys kissing. I thought it was the worst thing I had ever seen, later I realised it was just because I had never seen it before. Just like the first time jumping out of a plane, it is terrifying, but doing it again and again you become use to it. It becomes acceptable. I am confident many opponents to same sex couples, marriage have little to zero contact with homosexuals. It would have been great to ask people opposed to same sex marriage, if they have had dinner with a same sex couple in their home, or how many homosexuals they personally know. If they knew us, these sheltered people could see us together they would see how similar our relationship is to their own relationships.

In my early twenties I started coming to terms with my homosexuality, funnily enough when I started drinking alcohol and my true feeling couldn't be hidden anymore. Part of me accepting my homosexuality was to sacrifice my belief I would ever have children. My best friend couldn't

understand why I would be gay because I would not be able to have children. I had been educated to believe only a woman and a man was the only healthy way to raise a child. I lost the closeness to my cousins as I was terrified they would hate me, I was scared my Auntie and Uncle would think I couldn't look after them, or would expose them to obscene material. I was terrified of people seeing public displays of affection. By my late twenties I realised I had a lot more issues in terms of accepting my homosexuality.

Now in my early thirties I now have come close to fully accepting my homosexuality. I am not ready to claim I have completely accepted my homosexuality because I surprise myself by finding more issues I didn't even realise I have. I have become comfortable with public displays of affection, particularly in straight environments. I now believe I have every right to bear children and able to get married and am ready to fight for it. I am willing to have children but not willing to do so until I know my children would be safe in my family. To feel I am a family with my husband I need to be married to him. That way I know if anything happened to me, my husband would have full custody and rights without many legal issues. We would have total access our children in hospital at will (not being refused entry as not family) and being the parent (default guardian) just like any other heterosexual family. My children could go to school confident that their fathers love is respected and recognised with total confidence and belief in their family.

I firmly believe anyone opposed to gay marriage has no heart, and have no interest in children's well being. To this day queer children are pick on, laugh at citing they are not equal. "You can't even get married". They are picked on as second class people and our government supports this harassment by excluding homosexuals from marriage. It shows any children the government doesn't believe homosexual love is real. A disappointing consequence from this legislation reinforces bigots and homophobic people to disown their children, fear their children will be treated badly, more there children are unable to marry and feel shame of their child who is gay. The saddest is when parents lose their child to suicide and I firmly place this blame on the government's inability to do the right thing and provide total equality.

When the right thing is so obvious it should be criminal for such inaction. A director of a company would go to jail for failing to act resulting in a death of an employee under occupation health and safety act, why isn't parliament when their policies are causing the loss of lives because of their failing to act? What's worse this problem is due to action from the previous government specifically excluding same sex marriages.

With both my sister and I being homosexuals, my parents went through mourning of not having grandchildren and no wedding for their children. The only reason they had to go through this pain and sense of loss is due to government legislation and barbaric ideas presented by religious organisations. I have seen religious organisations play on my parent's guilt and their feeling of responsibility. Lulling them into believing it's their entire fault and they have failed as parents. This is amongst one of the most disgusting behaviours I have seen in my life; the reason being so insidious is due to the complete neglect of society to stop this and organisations representing themselves as humanitarians take advantage of people in a vulnerable emotional state.

It is time for the government to recognise opponents are only picking on a small group to win an easy fight, just like any bully in the school yard and thus to raise their profile.

As I matured I have become so cynical and lost faith a government can get it right. They pick on small groups people where possible; ignore real people in need until it's on the mass media and badly reacting to sensational stories on TV. A government that acts only what the mass media says to do so. Does someone gay like Dr George Duncan have to die again before we legalise gay marriage or worse does a child have to commit suicide leaving a note describing its was because they are gay, or a child being torn away from a man the child believes is his father simply because he wasn't the biological parent.

Having been out for over 12 years I have never come across a person who knows me neither challenge my homosexuality, offended me by being bigoted, been offended by my homosexuality, nor abuse me. I have employed hundreds of people casually over the years, many known about by my homosexuality and never had anyone resign or leave due to finding out. Thankfully the worse act of homophobia that has happened to me was weirdos yelling from their speeding car and being picked on in school. This highlights people that don't really care about if I can marry a man, they are far more concerned about interest rates, their home repayments or the state of the economy but mostly concerned with there own family.

Yet I can quiet easily describe the hurt and pain caused to my family and friends by my inability to marry, my mothers fears are awful never seeing her children marry, fearing I would always be alone, the government treating us badly about marriage what about other issue in life the government can choose to treat me badly. My friends feel guilty about inviting me to their weddings and embarrassed about rubbing it in my face. All my straight friends from university are now married and most have children.

My sister has moved to Toronto, Canada. She describes the country as being very understanding to queer issues. A government supportive in protecting it citizens and believing they are intelligent enough to marry the person they love. The sky hasn't fallen in; the end of the world is no closer than here. Moral degradation hasn't gripped the nation and plunged it into an immoral crisis. The same can be said for other countries that have legalised same sex marriage.

We are such a small group in society, its hardly going to open the flood gates of moral degradation to society abroad. If anything I believe it will improve self acceptance among homosexuals. Why exclude the section of society known for its openness for promiscuity with the one institution to support moral behaviour. Many homosexuals believe marriage is worthless and for straight people. I believe the main reason for this is by acknowledging your rights has been taken away or abused is a distressing feeling and denouncing marriage is easier. 97% of people in WEHO (the gay area of Los Angeles) opposed Prop 8 in California. It was clear if presented a choice homosexuals clearly would like the right to choose to marry and heterosexuals with regular contact with homosexuals share this belief. I would like to know how comfortable straight people would feel having gay people vote on straight people's rights.

I will marry the man I love and have children one day soon. I hope it will be in the country I believe has the best lifestyle for my children, husband and myself. When I am ready to marry I will move overseas to a country of tolerance and acceptance where my family is recognised.

If you oppose same sex marriage, don't marry someone of the same sex. That doesn't give you the right to stop others whom choose to marry people of the same sex and treat them like lower human beings.

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Daniel Osborne