

I am writing in support of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 to remove all discrimination from the Marriage Act 1961 on the basis of sexuality and gender identity.

I appreciate the progress that has been made already in removing discrimination on the basis of sexuality from 84 Commonwealth laws.

Still, the institution of marriage being defined as between a man and a woman is clearly discriminatory and unequal in its very nature. Marriage, in its current form, is essentially an exclusive club where only certain couples that fit the criteria can enter. The persuasion to exclude same-sex couples from marriage is an evident obstruction to a free and fair society, and is inconsistent to an inclusive Australia and the multicultural values that our country espouses.

I have been fortunate to share a strong commitment with my same-sex partner for eleven years and we value our deep and successful relationship built on love, dedication, trust, optimism and at times, perseverance and patience. Our friends and family have treated us as a married couple for many years and some consider us more capable with our relationship than their own heterosexual marriages.

It is disrespectful and demeaning that some religious groups wish to continue to obstruct us from marriage just as it is disrespectful and demeaning for me to obstruct them from practising their religion. My right to marry my partner, just as the right of heterosexual couples to marry, has no bearing on the right to religious freedom. It would be an arrogant and ill-conceived notion that religious views will change because of marriage equality.

I am aggrieved by the denial of my right to marry my partner despite having demonstrated our enduring relationship which is an exercise that most heterosexual couples do not have to undertake and authenticate to others.

I would like to see this Bill passed so that we can continue our lives with mutual respect in a free, fair and diverse society.