

First name: Paul

Last name: McNiff

Do you wish for your name to be withheld from publication?: No

Do you wish for this submission to be confidential?: No

Your submission:

I write to express my full and unequivocal support for the rights of gay men and lesbian's to have full and equal rights in our country. This is in relation to the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

I cannot believe that in this day and age the country that we live in, and that I was born in, still supports and advocates discrimination against gay men!!

At one time our society believed that black people were "less valid and less important and had less rights than" white people were due. Many white people went along with this and stood by watching the government and others actively discriminate against a minority group. Of course it was never and is never true that any group of people are less than another, and it was discrimination at its finest (or should I say poorest). This has changed to a large degree (thank goodness)...

At one time men (and many women) believed that the role of the woman was in the house bearing babies and cooking for their husband and that without a man, a woman was irrelevant and meaningless in society. Women had no vote and weren't allowed to study or have gainful employment outside the house. This too, was an abomination against a group of people and has, to a large degree, changed.

Now it's our turn to stop being so closed minded and to realise that by not providing gay men and lesbians with full and equal rights, that we are again discriminating against our own people. Gay men and lesbians are born that way. We would be dumb as planks if we really believe that anyone in their right mind would choose to go against their own will (and the will and pressure from society) to be gay or lesbian if they weren't born that way.

Are we really that far back in the dark ages? Are we really willing to continue to pretend that gay men are the ones who hurt our children.

I am all against protecting our children from predators and from the negative influences that might corrupt or hurt them. Gay men are not in this category, despite the ignorant religious zealots who continue to believe that we are

It's a fact that we have children who are born gay in our culture, society and world. This is what god created...

It's a fact that these children are mostly born in heterosexual relationships and are still gay (even though they have pressure from their "straight" parents).

No amount of pressure from my parents or from anyone when I was a child would have turned me into a heterosexual - I'm just not born that way. It's just not who I am. So I don't understand why heterosexual people believe that their own sexuality is so fragile, pliable or weak-willed. Gay men are not out to convert straight boys. This is such a homophobic and fear-based myth.

It's a fact that by discriminating against gay and lesbian adults that we actually actively perpetuate the hatred and bullying of young gay and lesbian people in our schools and our world.

It's a fact that many young men suicide as a result of the hatred they experience because they don't fit into the heterosexual/sporting/macho model that we try to impose on our children and society. The fact that being called "gay" has such a weighty power is the result of the homophobic laws and the active discrimination against gay and lesbian people in our world.

It's a fact that many heterosexual couples fail their own gay children due to their own ignorance and homophobia.

It's a fact that there are thousands of orphans around the world who would do well with loving parents, gay, straight or otherwise, rather than being left alone unsupported in orphanages, and yet our ignorant government still says that gay people wouldn't be worthy parents.

The sad part is that ignorantly people believe that gay men are the ones who abuse young boys, while the fact is that most pedophile's actually identify as heterosexual and many, if not most are married or in relationship with people of the opposite gender.

How long will this stupidity continue to be part of our legal system? I was born here and I'm gay. How do my own country's laws support me? I wanted to adopt children, but have been unable to because of the laws of our country. What's to say that gay men wouldn't be just as good, if not better parents than many of the heterosexual people who don't have to think about it and have kids for all the wrong reasons.

Anyway, if you want more reasons why this country should start to turn these laws around and provide their own children, who are doing no harm to anyone, with equal rights, please feel free to contact me...

It was the black's turn at one point in time. Then it was the women's turn. Now it's gay men and lesbians' turn to be seen as equal in their own society. The sad part is that we have to fight so hard to be equal. Shame Australia!

Take off your homophobic glasses and fix this. What if by doing so you actually moved towards creating a world where we're taught to we stop judging others based on "who they were born as" rather than actively sending out hatred and hurt.

The time is now...

Paul McNiff