

Do you wish for your name to be withheld from publication?: Yes

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

Your submission:

I write to express my support for the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

My reasons are as follows:

I and every other non heterosexual person I know was brought up in a heterosexual home. Marriage was the norm. We were raised by married people. Long before I came out as gay I had attended numerous weddings and public celebrations of love of my much loved friends and relatives. (By the way, not only were we not raised to be gay, this was absolutely our parents last wish for us, yet it somehow still couldn't change who we were.) To this day, I am invited to weddings of my heterosexual friends, including those on their second time around!

I can understand and accept that, in the eyes of many members of society (NOT those who know me), I am unnatural, a freak etc with no worth at all, or a sinner, or someone who has 'chosen' this 'lifestyle'. All of which is just not true.

Being gay IS natural. It is innate, not a choice at all. Almost all gay people I know struggled with it. We fought against it our 'naturalness'(apologies for the made up word). So many people lose family and friends as a result of coming out. I am very lucky though and treasure all my heterosexual friends and family who still love and care for me. They accept my gayness as just a part of me, like blue eyes, left handedness and greying hair. Should I think like this and be grateful for their acceptance? Well yes I am, because my father has not spoken to me for over 15 years.

The only choice is whether we live unhappily pretending to be straight people and hurting our unsuspecting partners in the process, or facing up to ourselves and beginning to like ourselves for who we are. This means to live our lives being true.

Homosexuality exists in every country I have every visited, across race, religion, creed and it is clearly evident on every continent. My gay friends are from many racial groups, religions, socio-economic backgrounds and they work in all fields, including motor mechanics, tradies, builders, farmers and some other non stereotypical professions. We are not all just designers or hairdressers. Some of us can't even cook!

If the tables were turned, can the people reading this seriously imagine being forced into marrying or having intimate relations with members of the same sex just to keep your family/friends/employer/society happy? Can you please try to comprehend the enormity?

It is verging on abuse.

Marriage recognition is part of this discussion.

Whether all or the majority of the gay community is in favour of marriage is irrelevant. Many heterosexuals don't care/choose to marry either...but they still can. We cannot. Yet our love for our partners can be just as strong and binding. Or more. Or less. It depends on the couple.

This 'protecting the institute of marriage' is all rot (no offence intended). It is currently predominantly heterosexuals wrecking this 'institute'. If you want to protect this institute, then the answer is simple. Ban heterosexuals divorcing. Yet here we have more people begging to be able to marry, however WE somehow, are the ones endangering this 'institute'. Even when we can't marry, we endanger this institution. Hardly rational.

As for registration, how many heterosexuals would be pleased to be told their only option to officially recognise their lifelong love is a 'registration'? Like registering a dog or a cat? At least can we go for 'Civil Union'?

Regarding the churches I would expect most people agree the churches can make their own rules. Exclude and discriminate if they wish in spite of many of God's teachings. Although why aren't so many other rules from the bible followed? Why focus on this one? They conveniently ignore so much. Yes, marriage was invented by them in centuries past. But so was the dowry. Do we still follow that?

Read the bible to see how much is ridiculous nowadays. (Even though I am spiritual and I do believe in God - to read the Bible is at times horrifying. Apparently taking slaves from neighbouring lands is ok, as is killing people (a prostitute related to a man of the cloth). Go check it out then ask yourself why do the churches cling to certain lines about homosexuality being so bad when many other lines in the Bible have been discounted as simply intolerable?

Our government should not be a religious arm of the church. It must not be controlled by them otherwise it will soon have to be controlled by whatever the various religions dictate - not just our predominant Christianity here, but soon Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism etc.

Our government should stand for basic human rights and I don't just mean democratic decisions. Democracy is a flawed concept in some ways, because people's minds (hence votes) can be swayed, influenced or controlled, especially in these days of media power. We all know this. Had Hitler been able to convince the Germans to vote for the Holocaust, would that make it any more acceptable just because most people voted for it? Not at all. The will of the people is not always what is humane.

I am a citizen of Australia. I was born and raised here. I pay my taxes, I work full time to help the country and society, I do volunteer work (to help heterosexuals mostly), yet I AM treated as a second class citizen. Society says to me I am less than equal. I deserve nothing.

Here's a novel thought - how about if the country/churches agree that because we aren't equal citizens, we don't have to pay any tax whatsoever? Or just 10% whatever. Float that idea publically and just wait for the uproar!

We have moved as a society, beyond discrimination on religious, racial and physical ability/disability grounds. Why is this, the last bastion of discrimination, other than for reasons of pure bigotry?

Will I ever be valued by my country and given the same rights as everyone else? Or will I die before then?

When you go to sleep at night, just remember some other Australians are not entitled to what you are - through no fault of their own. How well does that sit with John Howard's often mentioned Australian cultural value of giving everyone a 'Fair Go'?

I am contactable via the Equal Love website. Please feel free to do so. I wish I could do more. I cannot attend the Equal Love rally in case I am photographed and families at my school find out.

I have however instructed the Equal Love website administrators to request my name is not to be made public at any stage, because after 26 years as a caring Primary School teacher, I still have to live in fear of the parents at my school finding out I am gay.

I wonder just how many parliamentarians have had had to live their life in fear like that?

Thank you for listening.

Respectfully yours,