

First name: Jessica

Last name: Firouz-Abadi

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 support for the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

I have been out since high school, and have never felt discriminated in my personal or professional life. All my family and friends are aware of my lesbianism, and to tell you the truth, I keep forgetting about the label, because I don't feel different within my society. I don't feel like a pariah, I'm not a flag waving activist, because I haven't felt the need to be... until now.

I have been an entrepreneur in the hospitality industry since 1996 and have created jobs for many people along the way. I have never gone on the dole, and have proudly paid my taxes without the urge to cheat because I respect the fact that I am in an enviable position to uphold the social values of our country.

Despite this, I am being discriminated against by my government by being unable to choose to marry the person of my choice. In the deep south of the USA before the civil war, black slaves were allowed to marry. Murderers on death row can get married. We do not live in a fundamentalist country. Let our laws reflect this.

I feel that the division of state and church is very much present in this country, my country! My mother is a 6th generation Australian, coming from Irish and Scottish stock. She owns a property near Barcaldine in QLD, and to this day goes out twice a year to help with the shearing, now with the help of my brother. My father is originally from Iran. He immigrating from the states to Australia in the 1960s and is a medical doctor and university educator. I know all about the ugliness of laws that are in place only to uphold the religious beliefs of dictators, and I think it's about time Australia faced up to it's responsibilities to it's own history. To not allow same sex marriage is in my eyes a violation of equal rights. I feel unrepresented and betrayed by a political machine that seems more and more out of touch with it's constituents, instead bowing to the absolute rule of the PR machines that really run the show (sorry, you, the reader, are probably from a PR company, but I think it's true).

Please, whomever reads this, understand that we are all Australians, and should be given as much legal recourse to shape our lives as anyone else. Don't wait for "the right time". It's now. History will judge us as a nation, so let's try to behave in a way that won't embarrass us later, AND give all Australians the same rights.