

To The Senate Committee regarding Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment  
Bill 2009

Re: Inquiry into same sex marriage.

Submitted by  
Bozena Lawonski

I am writing this submission in order to lend support to same sex marriage.

I strongly believe that legalising same sex marriage will bring several advantages not only to the same sex couples concerned but also to the health and integrity of our society in general.

1. First of all I would like to dispel the myth that same sex marriage is a threat to the institution of marriage.  
The gay community represents only a small minority and as such it cannot be a threat to traditional marriage.  
If anything, it will add to the stability of our society as a whole.  
If a gay couple down the road gets married it will not diminish the value and integrity of my marriage.

2. Allowing gay couples to legally marry will bring more stability to their relationship.  
The research shows that the marriage is a much stronger and more stable social structure than a de facto relationship.

This is especially important if a family has children.

It is vital for a child to feel safe and secure in their family.

I am afraid that denying a gay couple an opportunity to strengthen their union in the same way as the rest of us is able to do, can be detrimental to creating a safe and secure environment for children involved.

- 3 Allowing gay marriage will bring fairness in relation to the treatment of children of same sex couples.  
It will remove any ambiguity concerning their status and rights.  
It will eliminate a degrading, deprecating and unnecessary process of having to constantly prove child's rights to the fair and dignified treatment that other children are receiving automatically.

- 4 I believe that denying a couple the rights to marry is a violation of their human and civil right to live their life fully and to be granted the same rights as other citizens.  
We would not like someone to look at our marriage and after evaluating it, according to his or her criteria, state that our love and relationship is not good enough to deserve a status of a married couple.

5 I also strongly believe that officially recognising same sex couples' right to marry will lift and strengthen the status of gay community as a social group.

It will be an important step towards ending their social isolation and diminishing bullying that gay community unfortunately still experiences on a daily basis.

6 My concern is especially for gay youth who experiences tremendous trauma going through the process of coming out.

The reaction from the community and even their of their own families is often very traumatising to young gay people at the very stage of their development when establishing their self image is a priority.

Being unable to have their sense of identity supported by the community can lead, and in many cases, have lead to disastrous outcomes. Gay youth suicide is not uncommon.

That is why changing our perception and stand towards the gay community is vital.

Legalising same sex marriage will be an important step towards changing that perception.

7 The most positive result of all will be continuing on the road to becoming a more tolerant, accepting and coherent society, that has always been proud of standing up for the rights of minorities.

After all, that is what makes a truly great society.

Bozena Lawonski