

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY AMENDMENT BILL 2009

I have always been at a loss to understand how in a modern democracy like Australia, my basic human rights are being denied by the very government whose purpose is to protect these rights.

Regardless of whether I am in a same-sex relationship or not, I should have the right to choose to be married. Marriage is not a religious concept. It is a commitment made in public to sharing your life with a loved one. I have written many letters to the Howard and Rudd governments over the years, asking a simple question: why can't I get married? The answer (on the few occasions I receive a reply) is always a assortment of contradictory, tired and fallible excuses as to why marriage should be restricted to heterosexual couples.

I was unaware that human rights were based on popular vote, which is apparently the case according to our current government.

I have been advised by numerous departments of the Federal government that the current system of "registering" same-sex couples is the "most appropriate way to recognise" same sex couples. Such idea is not only personally offensive but furthermore hurtful and antiquated. Under what terms has this been deemed "most appropriate", and whose agenda does this serve? "Registering" a relationship is something I personally equate with the act of registering a car, or a pet. It is certainly not what anybody could consider a romantic expression of love.

Earlier this year my sister got married - it was a lovely wedding, and I too will get married one day. However, due to the mere fact that my partner and I are both male and living in Australia I am denied this right.

It is not unreasonable for same-sex attracted people to be asking for this right – we are asking for equal treatment, not special treatment. My desire to live in a country where my love is accepted and celebrated is so strong that I often seriously consider moving to one of the many countries in the world where same-sex marriage is legal.

I really just don't understand how this blatant act of discrimination has not been redressed. Australia is famous for its multiculturalism and ability to openly accept people from different origins and religions. However I feel that our government has become too dependent on bowing to the religious right and as such my life is directly affected. Allowing me to marry will not directly affect the few bigoted people who disagree with same-sex marriage. But for the government to try to appease them does impact my life detrimentally.

In culmination, allowing same-sex marriage is not just about giving everyone equal access to human rights. It would, more importantly, be seen as a proactive stance by our government against discrimination and hatred toward same-sex attracted people. This is the only way that our country can progress to become a truly progressive and accepting place to live.

An Australia where same-sex couples continued to be treated as second-class citizens is not a country that I am proud to call home.

Submission by:

Grant Goodwin