

First name: Jessica

Last name: Mills

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

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

Your submission:

To Whom It May Concern:

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

I am pleased to know that the issue of equal relationship recognition is now being taken seriously by the Australian Government, as evidenced by this Senate Inquiry.

I have known from the age of 9 that I am a woman attracted to other women. Unfortunately, thus far, this has meant that I have not been allowed to entertain the ideal of celebrating a legally recognised union with my life partner, witnessed by our family and friends.

I believe that the lack of legal recognition for same-sex and transgendered couples in lifelong relationships contributes to the stigma, isolation, and prejudice that many same sex attracted people feel.

When I was in high school, I was labelled a lesbian and bullied and ostracised for approximately 20 months. No one bothered to confirm with me if I was attracted to women, and even though I am, I believe that it is no reason to treat another human being so differently and unfairly.

The legal status of same sex couples has helped to make this discrimination acceptable. Although I knew in my heart that I was (and am) a decent human being and have contributed much to my community over the years, there was little in the eyes of the law to support me.

Since my days at high school, I have seen equal opportunity and anti discrimination laws and practices put in place. And yet there fails to exist a recognition of life long same sex relationships as equal to opposite sex relationships.

By recognising same sex relationships as equal to opposite sex relationships, I am not asking for them to be considered the SAME. There are many differences between these relationships, however there are also many similarities. The most important of which are that same sex couples love and support one another emotionally, financially, spiritually, practically and intellectually. Just as opposite sex couples do.

I am asking that same sex couples are finally able to also support each other legally. And that the Australian government acknowledges that discrimination is unacceptable, by recognising the commitment of same sex relationships as equal to that of opposite sex relationships.

Sincere Regards,  
Jessica Mills