

Dear Senator Crossin,

I would like to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 in support of marriage equality for same-sex couples.

The *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth) is a civil law which applies to all Australians. I believe the *Marriage Act* should be amended to ensure same-sex couples have equal rights to marry in Australia. I believe section 88EA of the *Marriage Act* should be repealed so that overseas same-sex marriages are recognised in Australia in the same way as opposite-sex marriages between consenting adults.

Attending the weddings of my sister and close friends has always been important to me as an expression of my love for them and my support for their relationship. Unfortunately, once I am there I find myself get caught up in sadness and anger as the words of the marriage celebrant make it clear that such a union is not something I and my partner are allowed to make. These feelings run deep for me and stop me from celebrating their special day whole heartedly. I work in a youth service for young people of diverse genders and sexualities. I see the impact that exclusion and discrimination has on their lives. It is often difficult to nurture their resilience when I am so aware of how that discrimination, exclusion and inequality can arise as you try to move on with your life.

It is time to ensure that discrimination against same-sex couples in the *Marriage Act* is removed.

Yours sincerely,

David Moutou