

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 I believe section 88EA of the *Marriage Act* should be repealed so that overseas same-sex marriages are recognised in Australia in the same way as opposite-sex marriages between consenting adults.

I would like to speak in support of making marriage equal in Australia. My argument in support is simple. Gay and lesbian people are a part of society and that will never change. As such gay and lesbian people contribute to society and pay taxes. In fact, gay and lesbian people pay more taxes as they are not entitled to the financial and social benefits that marriages allows others. I have little doubt that gay and lesbian people suffer untold discrimination for not being able to participate in this institution. From applying for rentals to partner employment benefits to property and estate rights. Moreover, allowing gay and lesbians Australians the right to marry is about respect. Civil unions are not acceptable as a compromise. They are, in fact, an insult. Undoubtedly, there will be those who will argue that marriage is between a man and a woman and this should not change. These same people will argue that proponents of this legislation are attempting to redefine marriage. This argument is misguided as marriage as an institution in civil society has evolved considerably throughout history. In as recently in the late twentieth century, white people were forbidden to marry those "of colour", catholics were banned from marrying protestants and women were largely silent partners in marriage. Marriage has evolved for the better and continues to do so. This legislation is the next step towards greater equality and harmony in marriage and I welcome it.

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

Yours sincerely,

Jesse Parker