

In 2003, the SA parliament became the last to pass legislation allowing SA government employees who are in same sex relationships equal treatment under state public sector superannuation schemes.

Despite myriad inquiries that have cited this injustice under federal law - applying not only to federal public servants but also to all employees in the private sector - nothing has been done to give same sex partners equality. It is a disgrace.

I changed jobs 3 years ago - moving from the SA public service to a federal agency based in Melbourne. My partner and I have been disadvantaged by the continuing delays in getting this reform through.

Superannuation was introduced in Australia to provide a source of retirement income for couples in later life - yet it fails its own basic policy objectives because it excludes every same sex couple in the country from equal treatment.

The bigotry and prejudice that is evident in the delays over the years is unacceptable and unrepresentative of the wishes of the vast majority of the Australian people. My parents and family, all hard-working taxpayers, are equally bewildered and outraged by the obstacles that some in the parliament seem to delight in putting in the way of this reform.

The very fact that this bill has been unnecessarily referred to an inquiry, notwithstanding that there have been 15 public inquiries into recognition of same sex relationships across Australia in the last decade, is to be condemned. Justice delayed is justice denied.

There are same sex partners who, as a result of the failure to act by the federal parliament over the last decade and a half, have died without being able to ensure their partners of many years have an adequate retirement income from their superannuation.

That fact should weigh heavily on the consciences of those who have, for so long, stood in the way of this humanitarian reform.

The money that is set aside in every working Australian's superannuation account is meant to be their own. I thought we lived in a liberal society, in which the rights of the individual to direct and control their own life were paramount.

Yet the state stands in the way of permitting me, as a superannuant who is in a same sex relationship making provision from my retirement funds, in the event of my death, for the one I love the most. How is that just? How can that be justified?

I do not understand why I, a hard-working public servant and taxpayer, should be treated differently just because the man I love is not a woman. I'm not asking to turn society upside-down, just to be allowed to

provide for his future if I pass on before he does. Is that so much to ask?

Matthew Loader