

To: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Subject: Submission to the Same-Sex Relationship Bill 2008

Dear Mr Hallahan,

I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission into the Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws - Superannuation) Bill 2008. I fully support the objectives of the Bill, to remove discrimination against same-sex couples and their children in relation to Commonwealth superannuation and related benefits.

I believe this legislation is long overdue. It is a critical first step in providing legal and financial equality for same-sex couples. I hope to see future legislation implementing the remaining recommendations contained in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Same Sex: Same Entitlements report.

I support the Bill's inclusion of married, heterosexual and same-sex de facto couples under the straightforward and practical category of "couple relationship". Same-sex de facto couples should be treated in the same way as heterosexual de facto couples.

I reject suggestions that same-sex couples should be recognised as "interdependents", along with other caring non-couple relationships. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission says that past interdependency definitions in private superannuation have failed to provide same-sex couples with real equality. Interdependency definitions do not give the clear and certain protection that de facto definitions provide.

I support the recognition of children with same-sex parents under the Bill. This definition acknowledges the reality of family diversity in Australia. The legal recognition of families and the equal access to entitlements is in the best interests of children.

I urge the Committee to commend the Bill to parliament in order to ensure that the discrimination faced by same-sex couples can be removed as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,