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Dear Committee Secretary,

I would ask that the committee redress the injustice of discrimination faced by same sex couples by overturning existing discriminatory laws. Whilst discrimination based on ignorance will continue it is incomprehensible that in such a progressive nation and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that our government's policies have allowed such exclusive practices to continue. We must overturn the remaining institutional and policy barriers which marginalize this group.

Whilst my experiences have not been extreme I am always aware of the many factors that exclude me. My most recent experience was with the Medicare levy. Ideologically opposed to private health insurance I have been forced to pay the additional levy. This in itself is no different to anyone else who earned more than the threshold amount (in my case albeit only a few thousand dollars over). I am forced to file my tax as a single person despite having a partner of 16 years. He had not been in paid employment and I was the primary bread winner. As our relationship isn't recognised our combined income could not be considered for the Medicare levy making liable for an additional payment. Had we been an opposite sex couple we would have been considered a 'family' and our combined incomes (being under the threshold) would have rendered us exempt from this payment. Whilst this is a minor example it is indicative of what may lay ahead for us if laws don't change.

I implore the committee to do the right thing and progress this bill enabling same sex couple to enjoy most of the rights experienced by other Australians. Please don't continue to neglect the dignity, human and economic rights of same sex Australians? We are tired of sitting at the bottom of the list of nations that discriminate; USA, Zimbabwe, Russia. Do we really need this status?

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission and I hope, for acting in a positive and progressive manner.

Brian Dunn