

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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Submission for the Inquiry into the Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008

Dear Committee Secretary,

Firstly, please excuse the lateness of my letter; I wasn't aware that there was yet another inquiry into Same-Sex relationships.

As a mature gay man in a long-term relationship, I wish to tell my story and how it highlights the injustice or current law.

I live with my partner in Hong Kong. We have been together for almost six years.

During this time we have visited Australia on approximately ten occasions. We are however, only permitted to remain a total of four weeks on any occasion and are allowed only two visits per calendar year. This is because my partner and I are only able to live together in China under employer/employee law. I employ him as my domestic helper. As such, domestic helpers have limitations placed upon visa conditions.

As if this weren't tough enough, if I retire tomorrow, we are currently unable to live as a recognised couple in my own country of birth, which is something we wish to do.

We do not wish to be married (registering our relationship under Australian law will suffice), but we do wish to be able to enter Australia as often as we wish and for our relationship to be acknowledged in all areas of law, including Immigration Law, which seems to be left out of most discussions and submissions I have read.

I strongly support the Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008.

Yours sincerely

Neil Raymond Appleby