

Dear Senate Committee,

If Australia is truly committed to equality it must remove the injustice in the marriage laws. The legislation on marriage is civil and should not be imbued with religious prejudice against same sex couples. Religious organisations are free, and must remain so, to refuse to marry same sex couples in their places of worship, but civil law must treat all Australians equally or it is an unjust law.

The history of marriage is actually quite bleak and has very little to do with love. It was the bartering of human property for millennia. The first marriage vows were between two men, between the groom and the father of the bride. The only vow spoken was "I give you this woman for the ploughing of legitimate children". The bride's consent was not required.

I am happy that the institution of marriage has progressed along with the recognition of women as full emancipated and voting citizens. I am happy that the bride is now permitted to speak for herself legally and to consent to her own marriage. This is progress and the institution of marriage has done well to move with the times.

Now it is time for marriage, as a cultural institution, to once again shake of the shackles of entrenched cultural injustice and prejudice and allow same sex couples recognition within it's bounds.

Allowing the laws of marriage to discriminate against same sex couples perpetuates homophobic bigotry and hate. In countries that have had equal rights for all their citizens regardless of sexuality and gender for the longest period are factually the safest places for same sex attracted people of any age. A law that discriminates against same sex people is a law that says homophobic bullying and violence is okay, because these people are not in a culturally acceptable relationship.

Your sincerely
Helen Kaplick