

Dear Committee Members,

I write to support the Human Rights and Anti Discrimination Bill 2012 and I ask the Committee to recommend that the Bill be passed before the next election.

LGBTI people are no different from the rest of society's members. They study, work, meet lifelong partners, have holidays, children, go out for dinner, see movies. They are regular members of the community and are entitled to participate within it free of discrimination, just as heterosexual people are able to do without question or justification. In a decent, fair and compassionate society there is no need for the retention of archaic laws that prevent the equal rights of GLBTI people being upheld.

My female partner and I have a toddler aged son and we are not going to let him grow up believing we are lesser citizens because of the parochial and fearful reactions expressed towards us by some members of the religious right. We will teach him to be proud of his origins, to learn how to stand up for who we are as a family. I wish we did not have to think about this however and were sure we have brought him into a reasonable society in which he will not have to deal with others' small mindedness and he could therefore just grow up as other children can, without having to be prepared to manage the possibly hostility of others towards him and his parents.

I do not believe religious organisations should be able to discriminate against clients or employees on the basis of their GLBTI identity, including in aged care facilities. Government funded agencies should also not be able to discriminate in this way, including religious ones. If a religious organisation wishes to discriminate against GLBTI people the details of this should be described in position descriptions, on their website and all service brochures in order that potential clients, employees and the community at large is made aware of the deplorable attitude promoted within that particular agency.

A commissioner responsible for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination should be appointed to oversee and respond to the specific issues highlighted by this area.

Sincerely, Pia

Ms Pia Cerveri