

17/02/12

To the Committee Inquiry regarding the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010,

I am a young Australian citizen, studying at the University of Queensland. I feel very privileged and proud to live in a democratic nation which recognises the inherent dignity and equality of all people. Australia can be proud of its advances towards building a society where no person needs to fear institutionalised discrimination on the basis of traits which they cannot alter and which harm no other being.

As a young Australian, my peers and I consider with great surprise and horror the previous treatment of women, Indigenous Australians and other minorities. We look upon the past with sorrow but think upon the progress made with pride. It is no longer acceptable to attack the rights of people from diverse backgrounds. The Australian Government inspired this change of social values through courageous legislative decisions. Young Australians look to the institutions and authorities of their country to learn which values are regarded as truly 'Australian'.

I am a sister, a student, a volunteer worker, a daughter and a partner. I am also gay. I believe strongly that my sisters, peers, work colleagues, parents, partner and I deserve all deserve the right to participate in society. Marriage equality is not about the financial protection provided by domestic partnership legislation. Marriage equality is about recognising that, as an Australian citizen, my partner and I should hold the right to commit to one another through marriage. Marriage equality is about the recognition that people opposed to gay marriage need not marry a gay person, but they do not have the right to encroach on the rights of others. Marriage equality is about mental health. Marriage equality is about giving gay youth who are suffering from bullying and family rejection something of which to dream. Marriage equality is about giving gay people something to which they can point; something to hold close as proof that their nation's Government values them. When the Government leads with courage, society will follow. Marriage equality is about love. I love my country. I ask for nothing more and nothing less than equality. I hope that this country will make me proud again.

Sincerely,

Keely Gordon-King