

2/29/2012

**Dear Senate Committee**

I applaud the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010 and couldn't endorse it with more enthusiasm. My hope is that Australia takes this opportunity to make an historic decision that further removes discrimination and confirms that a segment of the community are in fact equal to many others who have enjoyed the freedom and right to marry until now.

As a homosexual man, I know what it is like to fight persecution and bigotry on a daily basis throughout my whole life. We are not asking for anything extraordinary, with respect to the freedom of choice (to marry) that many take for granted. This is about equality, rights, discrimination, and most of all, the ability to share love and our lives in a meaningful, respectful and legitimate way.

I have been educated at a Catholic boarding school, and respect the place that religion has in society. I am a university educated professional, who takes pride in my contributions to society – regularly partaking in charitable work with a children's charity that I am a volunteer for. I give as much as I can to my committee, and try to live my life with honour and respect, not only for myself but for others. I am a great neighbor, loving friend and loyal family member. I am a tax payer, who doesn't 'take' from society.

However, I am not equal. I am, in all practicality, a second class citizen. I am beneath those who are heterosexual. Until now, their relationships are more meaningful than mine. How, in 2012, can this be? Why does the Government, the elected leaders of our nation, see that this is right? Bluntly, it isn't.

I am in a committed relationship with my one true love, and have been for many years. He has similar morals and contributions to society as I do. We love our families and friends, and are humbled in the love and support their return us. We love each other, immensely – more than I could describe in this letter. We love no different to any of our friends, or family, or neighbours, or colleagues. In fact, I'd dare say, we may love more if that makes sense. Why is it that we can't marry and declare that love to those who mean so much to us? It doesn't make sense. Why is it

## Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010



that if my partner were hospitalised, I don't have the right to visit, let alone make decisions regarding his health?

By passing this Bill, society as we know will not fall apart. This is evident from other nations who have granted similar rights to their citizens. It won't make marriage any less meaningful. It don't actually affect anybody other than the two same sex people getting married.

We all hear the opposing views, most of which from vocal religious lobby groups – discussing rights of children, being unnatural, the end of the world (yes, as dramatic as that) to name but a few. This isn't about childrens rights (that is a separate issue entirely), it's about the rights of two adults. The world will not end, and yes, same sex relationships are natural. I am not a freak, or sick, and neither are other homosexual members of the community.

This is a bill about rights, ending discrimination and love. My fear is that those most vocal against this bill will probably win in the end – pushing this human rights issue back years, if not decades. I fear that I may never marry the man that I love. I fear that I will continue to be a second class citizen. I fear that my vote, come election time will be useless, as I'm not important. I fear that I will continue to be taxed at the highest rate, to contribute to the services offered heterosexual (married or not) members of the community. I fear, that my, and others like me, voices will continue to not be heard, or respected. I fear that Australia will not be the progressive, global leaders that it could be.

Please, with heartfelt desperation, pass this Bill. Do what is right. This IS right.

Regards