

Inquiry into Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee members,

I urge you all to consider the Australia in which you wish to live.

I wish to live in an Australia that seeks to continue to develop and mature as an open, free, just and inclusive society. And as part of a progressive mature and free society, I advocate the pursuit of the removal of all barriers to this society.

Yet we live in a country that seeks to exclude rights conferred by marriage from a group in our society. The rights conferred by marriage are real and extend beyond a piece of symbolism and piece of paper: they are important and tangible, for example there are important times when only 'family' can visit in hospitals or are asked to make critical medical decisions.

We live in a country whose Constitution enshrines the separation of church and state. It is imperative that the definition of marriage not be dictated by any religious agenda. Though I also believe in the interests of this same religious freedom, that nobody could be obligated, such as under anti-discriminatory laws, to perform a marriage ceremony.

We live in a country where personal freedoms and limitation of government in the lives of citizens is cherished, yet we seek to limit the freedom of a class of citizenry to live their lives in a manner available to others.

I wish to live in an inclusive, open and free society and I believe marriage equality is part of that ongoing journey: I urge the committee to endorse Senator Hanson-Young's Bill.

Yours faithfully,
Tony Thomas