

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you in answer to the Senate's call out for submissions in relation to the Federal Government's review of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

I have attended the forum that was held a few years ago and have been watching closely how this inquiry has evolved.

For myself as a worker for Community Services here in Qld I feel compelled to submit my personal views and concerns on the Federal Anti-Discrimination Act.

For the last two years I have worked and supported sex workers who were participating in Lawful Sexual Activity here in Qld.

My major concern is that people who work in the sex industry in QLD and are going through child custody matters in the Family Law Courts in Qld are being grossly discriminated against for their Lawful Sexual Activity recognised by Qld legislation. However are not recognised by Family Law Court judges.

Mothers and Fathers are being separated from their children due to the blatant discrimination of Family Law Court Judges and their personal views of sex workers.

For instance I have been working /supporting a sex worker whom I have attended many Family Law Court hearings with. She had not seen her daughter for two and a half years. The Family Law court judge had seen fit that the child would be safer with the father who is a repeat stalker, an extremely violent man not just to the mother, and a drug dealer (all convictions were recorded). These incidents continue to go on in the presence of the child. The child and mother had lived together with the mother having 100% care of the child. I had attended their home on numerous occasions and could not fault the mother in any way for how she chose to put food on the table for herself and her daughter. I could only applaud her.

To have a child uprooted from the only parent she knows (as the father was incarcerated for most of her first 8 years of life) is an atrocity, especially if it is on the grounds of what Family Law Court judge's personal views are. As well as a blatant disregard for the State laws that the Family Law court judge chooses to work and reside in. (However I do understand that the Federal Courts are under Federal law not State law). To have a Family Law court judge sit there and hear what charges have been laid against the father whilst the child is in the father's presence and still choose not to allow unsupervised access to the mother is astounding.

I believe that this would be affecting many sex workers with children not just in Qld, around the nation.

For me this is extremely upsetting and frustrating as these people who I have supported have truly believed they would be safe from discrimination due to the Qld laws, and not discriminated against by a Family Law Court judge.

There is no continuity and it seems that Family Law Court judge's in Qld can play GOD whenever and with whomever they see fit. They are happy to let children be torn and sent away from homes that were functioning well and had food in the fridge all for their own personal beliefs.

This has been most enlightening working with sex workers and listening to Family Law Court judges views. I am sometimes ashamed to think that this goes on in Australia and makes me wonder why we even bother voting if that is how judges conduct themselves and the Australian government allow it to happen.

You cannot even make a complaint in relation to the Family Law Court judge until the case is over. That does not show me equity for all. It shows me there is a monopoly and Family Law Court judges have free reign in today's society.

Thank you for this opportunity

Yours Sincerely

Michele Dickinson