

12 September 2008

**Re: Inquiry into Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws – General Law Reform) Bill 2008**

Dear Committee

I am writing in support of the proposed bill to amend legislation in recognition of Gay and Lesbian relationships.

There has been vociferous argument as to why this Bill should not be passed, and although the arguments are varied, the underlying driver is a religious belief that gay men and lesbians are in some way not equal to heterosexuals.

Currently, a substantial group of Australian's are not treated as equal under Australian law. We are denied the rights (and responsibilities) as couples that most Australian's take for granted.

This month my partner and I celebrated our tenth anniversary. Both our parents are happily married, so are our siblings (there have been no divorces on either side of our family). The whole argument that acknowledging Gay and Lesbian relationships undermines marriage is a complete nonsense. Our commitment and love for each other (as part of an extended loving family) demonstrates this.

We are a hard working (tax paying) and dedicated couple who actively take part in our family's lives and are respected by them as a loving couple. It is illogical that we are still denied equal rights under Australian Law.

I trust that the committee will look at this issue as a way of ending discrimination against many Australian men and women who live in committed relationships. This is not about social engineering but about having legislation in place that treats all Australian's as equals.

Yours sincerely

Paul Clark