

GLBTI RIGHTS

ATTORNEY GENERAL & JUSTICE
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX RIGHTS
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN

“Homophobia as exhibited in the Senate today is as morally repugnant as racism or anti-Semitism.”

Senator Brian Greig

Spokesperson for Sexuality and Gender Issues

“The Democrats believe the Government’s policies need to reflect today’s society, rather than an outdated 1950’s approach.”

Senator Andrew Bartlett,
Leader of the Australian Democrats



Photo: www.geocities.com/robertsontony

Our Policy

Since our inception as a political party in 1977, the Australian Democrats have championed the cause of gay, lesbian and bisexual people and more recently, that of transgender people and those with intersex conditions.

We are proud to support these communities and honoured that they support us.

The Australian Democrats believe that all Australians have a right to equality under the law and in dealings with government, and should be protected from discrimination and vilification on the grounds of sexuality, transgender identity or intersex status.

We believe that all relationships should be treated equally and that people in same-sex relationships and their children should be able to access the same range of benefits avail-

able to more traditional families.

In areas such as superannuation, industrial relations, taxation, immigration, welfare, access to the family court, public service entitlements including within the Federal Police and the defence forces, same-sex couples do not have the same rights as other couples.

Until very recently, both Labor and the Coalition have refused to support equality for same-sex couples, often voting together to block attempts by the Democrats to remove discrimination.

When it comes to legislative change in the Senate, the Australian Democrats are the only party to have consistently sought and voted for equal rights for GLBTI people, and we’ve been doing it for well over a decade.

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Our record

The Australian Democrats:

- lobbied for and supported the lifting of a ban against gay men and lesbians in the military
- moved successful amendments to industrial relations legislation to prohibit discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of sexual orientation
- supported the interdependency category for immigration for same-sex couples and opposed the Howard Government's downgrading and capping of this immigration category
- voted to overturn Tasmania's anti-gay laws
- initiated the first national inquiry into sexuality and gender status discrimination
- moved for the removal of heterosexist and gender specific language in all legislation and regulations



- are the only party to have a parliamentary spokesperson on sexuality and gender identity issues
- established the Carter Network – a Democrat forum on sexuality and gender identity issues, and the Chris Carter Memorial Award for contributions to the GLBTI community
- supported and continue to achieve same-sex couple recognition at State and Federal levels
- introduced the Sexuality and Gender Identity Discrimination Bill to outlaw discrimination, harassment and vilification, and equalise same-sex relationships.
- were the first party to adopt a comprehensive GLBTI policy

What are we doing now?

In 2003 the Sexuality and Gender Identity Discrimination Bill was updated and re-introduced to the Senate where it has sat, undebated since 1995.

Seizing upon new-found support for GLBTI issues among opposition parties, the Democrats are again attempting to have the Bill fully debated - against a back drop of spectacular homophobia on the part of the Prime Minister, who continues to use same-sex marriage, parenting, and lesbian access to IVF as a cattle call to conservatives nationwide.

In May 2004, John Howard introduced legislation to prevent same sex couples from marrying and adopting children from overseas. The Democrats oppose this Bill, and successfully referred it to a Senate inquiry for a full examination of its impact. Further information about the Democrats' work towards full equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex Australians can be found at the carter website: www.carter.democrats.org.au