

Inquiry into the Provisions of the Same-Sex: Same Entitlements Bill 2007

This is my submission to the above Inquiry. There are no attachments. I have read the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum. I have previously read the HREOC's Report *Same-Sex: Same Entitlements* and I had made a submission to that Inquiry. My same-sex partner and I have been in a marriage-like relationship for 32 years.

I support the recommendations of the HREOC's Report in full. Your Bill faithfully implements the recommendations of the HREOC's Report. I therefore support your Bill.

To paraphrase my federal Member of Parliament, Malcolm Turnbull (in the electorate of Wentworth under the new boundaries), there are elements in our society who preach hatred against gays and lesbians and as a consequence the gay community faces a security threat far greater than that confronted by most Australians.

Anti-gay violence is practised regularly and the elements which preach hatred are the Church and the Government. Equality under federal laws is a necessary first step towards shaming those hate-mongers and abusers in Australia who, although they are in the minority, believe they have the tacit approval of the Government.

Gays and lesbians are first class taxpayers and second class citizens in Australia. Taxpayers' money, including mine, has been used by Governments in election mode to buy the votes of every constituency except mine. It seems there is never enough money for equal rights for same-sex couples.

Aborigines got equal rights in 1967. They didn't achieve equal outcomes but there were no legal impediments. Same-sex couples are still waiting for our equal rights under Commonwealth law forty years on.

It is time the Government's actions matched its recent rhetoric about not discriminating. It is time the Government delivered on its undertakings to end this legal discrimination against same-sex couples.

This is not about special rights. It is about equal rights. It is not about my safety and well-being but the safety and well-being of every gay and lesbian boy and girl born to heterosexual parents.

It is unacceptable for these children to be shamed or beaten by their parents and siblings, teachers and classmates, preachers and fellow parishioners. It is not right that these children should be chucked out of home and end up living on the streets. It is wrong that these children's educational and developmental opportunities are often blighted.

The vast majority of Australians, including parents of gays and lesbians, now understand this. Unfortunately, a small, outspoken and bigotted minority among us would rather cast out the approximately five per cent of the offspring of them and their fellow heterosexuals than change from their Old Testament ways and look towards the most important teachings of the New Testament.

The Government should be ashamed of bolstering the prejudices of these sanctimonious selective quoters of Old Testament verses and the intrinsically disordered arguments put forward by those deliberately-single men who are trying to determine how many celibates can perform pirouettes and gymnastic contortions on the head of a pin.

To paraphrase a New Testament verse, those who dance on the head of a pin will never pass through the eye of a needle. Or to put it another way, it is easier for a bigot to dance on the head of a pin than to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

I commend the above Bill and I congratulate the Australian Democrats for holding this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,
John Goldbaum