

INQUIRY INTO SAME SEX MARRIAGE LAW IN NSW

Name: Mr Simon Duffy

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Our family is not unique, in fact we are fairly 'stock standard' as far as families go. But what is unique to our family is that we are not equal and we experience significant discrimination within current Australian Law.

We have two lovely, gorgeous, active and loving little boys, one almost 8 and the other just 2. We adore our family just like most parents. We love to care for our boys, watch them grow, referee their fights, kiss their bumps, celebrate their achievements and teach them life's lessons along the journey we are experiencing together. Our boys and our family are our life. But our life is not considered 'equal' as my partner and I are the same sex and current law will not allow us to marry.

My Partner and I approach parenthood with a great deal of consideration, love and honesty. We do not know yet how we will honestly answer our children's questions about 'why?' their Daddy and Papa cannot get married like many of their friends and family. How can we teach them the life lessons of equality, understanding and acceptance when their family is not considered equal?

Our children have been fostered and then adopted through NSW Department of Community Services. How special it has been for us to have this opportunity to bring two boys into our life. We see our experience as a privilege but also ironic in that the NSW law allow us to adopt as a same sex couple but will not allow our family access to marriage.

My partner and I have been in a committed relationship for 12 years. We are a big part our extended family and active members of our community and our son's school community. We are a loving couple in any definition of the word 'couple'.

In the 12 years that my partner and I have been together we have experienced discrimination for being gay. We've had eggs thrown at us as we walked together, we have been called many derogatory names, read some disgusting things on the web and we've been shoved. None of this feels as terrible as the discrimination of not being able to recognise, celebrate and acknowledge our love, our relationship and our families as all others can. It feels hateful like we are lesser in some way. How can this be when we are so 'stock standard' and such an integral part of our community?

Much of the discrimination I felt as a gay person was at school where words such as 'poof', 'faggot' and many others were delivered with such hate. My partner and I cannot image this experience for our children, not because they are gay but because their Daddy and Papa are. Will we, will the current Australian Laws be responsible for this experience for our children? Allowing us to marry will not solve all discrimination to the LGBT community but it will go a long way to sending a message that same sex couples and the LGBT community is equal to all others.

We dream of the day our family and our relationship will be considered equal, the day my partner and I can marry to confirm our love and our family. Our hope is that this will occur in the very near future so that our family can move forward and grow proudly and our 'Life Lesson's' will continue to be honest, fair, equal and loving.

Warm regards

Simon Duffy

