

INQUIRY INTO SAME SEX MARRIAGE LAW IN NSW

Name: Ms Kathryn Sullivan

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Dears Ladies and Gentlemen,

I support the Australian Human Rights Commission's submission on gay marriage. Denying people the right to marry because of their gender or sexual orientation is nothing short of discrimination and should not be allowed to continue. There seems to be a number of reasons given for not allowing gay people the right to marry. These include:

- Marriage is a holy covenant between a man and a woman before the eyes of God.
- Gay de facto relationships are recognised.
- Gay couples cannot produce offspring

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask that religious views on the meaning of marriage be left to religious organisations and out the hands of our lawmakers. A marriage is a documented legal agreement which protects the rights and responsibilities of a married couple. Socially marriage is a way for couples to express their love and commitment to each other openly. As Australia is not a theocracy, the religious meaning of marriage should be left up to religious groups and to the individual to decide. Churches and other religious groups can decide for themselves whether their ministers will marry same-sex couples, but the law should provide same-sex couples to marry as it provides for heterosexual couples. Centrelink now recognizes gay de facto relationships. It is unfair and immoral that such couples share the responsibilities of any heterosexual couple, yet cannot share the same rights-namely the right to marry. I chose to marry. Our Prime Minister, Ms Julia Gillard, has chosen not to marry. In both cases we had a choice; gay couples do not. This is discrimination.

Secondly I find it offensive that the inability to produce offspring is given as a reason for not allowing gay marriage. I am a married woman, but my husband and I cannot have children together. As a couple we are infertile. Does this mean that we should forfeit the right to marry? Should our marriage be annulled? Nowadays families are extremely diverse. Couples like us may use egg or sperm donors, they may foster children or adopt. Gay couples, like infertile heterosexual couples, find ways to have children, but no doubt it is difficult for gay male couples in particular. Some religious people would argue that children need both parents in their upbringing. In reality many children in Australia are being brought up in single-parent families. Yet, in many cases the extended family and friends also play an important part in the children's upbringing. Wouldn't this be the same for gay couples with children? I believe it would.

In closing, please guarantee the rights of us all- regardless of whether we are heterosexual, gay, transgender or other. Are we not all equal before the law?
Thank you.