

National Human Rights Consultation Submission

AGWW-7QJBTC

Name: Hui-chang Wang

Submission Text:

My partner and I have been in a lesbian relationship for nearly 10 years. During that time, we have established a warm home in which both our families (parents, siblings, in-laws, nieces, nephews etc.) have enjoyed many happy and joyous events. We both hold senior jobs in the education and research fields and contribute as much as we can to our communities by volunteering our time, donating to charities, paying our taxes and behaving in a lawful manner.

Sadly, the Australian government, both past and present, continue to discriminate against us by not recognising our relationship as being of the same quality and sincerity as a marriage. Although many legal aspects of discrimination against us have been removed now, one of the most obvious discriminatory pieces of legislation still holds - that my partner and I cannot marry, despite our many years of happy partnership.

Indeed, despairing that we would never get recognition in Australia, we took advantage of Britain's civil partnership laws to at least give some official status to our relationship. However, not only is civil partnership still socially inferior to marriage (because the distinction is still made, despite the two being legally almost identical), but our UK civil partnership is not recognised in Australia at all.

Unfortunately, because Australia is the only western democracy with no constitutional or legislative bill of rights, it is difficult for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community to argue for greater protection of our human rights - indeed, we only had dozens of discriminatory legislation amended recently due to the particular leanings of the current Australian government. We have been subject to the whims of government rather than being able to appeal to the principles of universal human rights that would be enshrined if we had adequate legislation in this area.

I urge the Consultation to propose that a human rights bill or something similar be introduced in Australia so that my partner and I can live our lives on an equal footing with opposite-sex couples.