



This is a message to all people interested in equality, but who may be unaware of some of the issues that same sex attracted couples live with on a daily basis in Queensland.

As parents of same sex attracted sons and daughters, we just want the same rights privileges and responsibilities to apply to all our children equally, not be different just because of their sexual orientation.

Bullying:

As parents we also want to know that when our children are at school they are protected from homophobic bullying. Bullying of any kind can lead to low self esteem and depression, self mutilation, truancy from school, running away from home and suicide. This just isn't fair.

Our sons and daughters have the right to feel safe at school. We believe there should be a policy against homophobic bullying that is applied in all Queensland schools, not left gathering dust on the shelf as a token policy. Teachers and Administrators need to be provided education and training regarding sexuality issues. It's unfair to tell our children they need to act straight, play football, or that they just need to toughen up or that bullying is a part of life.

Research shows that approximately 20,000 Australian youth sleep on the streets nightly and 1 in 5 of these identify as lesbian or gay.

Civil Unions:

As Parents of lesbian daughters and gay sons we believe it's important that the general community understand:

- Same sex couples are not second class citizens. They have families and come from all walks of life.
- Civil unions for same sex attracted couples will not encourage homosexuality and will not harm society or individuals.
- There are disadvantages with being a de facto couple which civil union will erase and same sex couples presently don't have this privilege to access.
- De facto couples need a period of co-habitation to be legal, but for those in a civil union the recognition is immediate.
- Marriage/civil union is how society values and celebrates relationships.
- The right to legally recognise our relationship is a freedom heterosexuals take for granted and if permitted for same sex couples it would encourage stability, security and relieve many of the societal pressures placed on them that we as heterosexuals will never experience.

Civil Unions are recognised in - Croatia, Scandinavia, France, Germany, Israel New Zealand Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland, UK and some states in the USA.

Marriage is recognised in - Canada, Spain, South Africa, Netherlands, Belgium Massachusetts US



Adoption:

Families are changing. No longer does dad go to work and mum stay at home. Marriages are mixed, many are marrying more than once, families are blended and single pregnant mums are now keeping their babies.

Just because our sons and daughters are same sex attracted, doesn't mean that they aren't able to be good parents. As a parent it is difficult to stand by and watch this injustice continue and cause pain to our sons and daughters.

Many in society are unaware that:

- 20% of lesbians are having babies by IVF or donor. Most have partners who want to be legally part of the family unit and be permitted to adopt their partner's child/children.
- The non-biological parent has no rights. Legally they have no right to any information pertaining to the child, including education and health issues.
- It is possible for the children to be removed from the family unit if the mother becomes incapacitated or dies. Sometimes given to estranged family members.
- Children do not become unstable because of same sex parenting. Same sex couples love and value their children as much as heterosexual couples.
- It should be recognized that it isn't the structure of the family that is detrimental; it is the behaviors in the family.
- When both parents are recognized, the children have legal, financial and emotional security.

Below are letters you can date, sign, print off and send to Ms Bligh and Mr Springborg letting them know that you think it's time these injustices ended for those identifying as lesbian or gay. By doing so you may be improving the rights of a loved one or friend or someone you care about who is still to disclose their true selves to you.

Help us make a difference.

Hon. Ms. Anna Bligh
Premier Queensland
C/- Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Ms. Bligh

**STATE'S ROLE TO PROTECT MINORITIES
IT IS TIME FOR RECOGNITION OF SAME SEX ATTRACTED COUPLES AND THEIR FAMILIES**

With 2009 being an election year, we believe this is a great opportunity to end the discrimination that same sex attracted couples and their families live with on a daily basis. We believe Queenslanders are ready for equality that will bring us into line with some states and leaders of others.

The Federal Government has removed the economic discriminations and recognized same sex attracted couples and their children and is presently in the process of changing legislation.

We believe it is time Queensland recognized these families by providing them with the security of legalized relationships and the changes to legislation which would permit "known" adoption of their children.

We also believe that it is time that State Government took proactive steps to protect lesbian and gay youth in schools. Teen years are difficult enough without the added pressure of being bullied for something over which they have no control.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Lawrence Springborg MP
Leader of the Opposition
C/- Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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