



Marriage Discrimination is Harmful to LGBTI Australians' Health

As leading health organisations we call on the Australian Government to legislate for marriage equality and put an end to marriage discrimination.

It is our shared professional opinion, based on conclusive evidence, that denying people the right to marry is harmful to their health and wellbeing.¹

The longer we delay marriage equality, the longer people in LGBTI communities will experience the negative health impacts of being denied access to the same rights, privileges, responsibilities and institutions as the rest of the population.² This is a burden on these communities as well as our health system.

The evidence clearly shows that LGBTI communities have significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide than the general population.³

LGBTI people have poorer health outcomes not because of who they are, but because of societal stigma, discrimination and prejudice that results in their ill treatment and social isolation.

In addition, given past negative experiences, some LGBTI people are also reluctant to access healthcare services, resulting in delayed treatment, which further contributes to poor health outcomes.

Australians have always valued the principle of a fair go for everyone, but LGBTI Australians are not getting a fair go when it comes to marriage, and this inequality is negatively impacting their health.

Discriminatory legislation is an impediment to LGBTI people achieving the highest attainable standard of health. In line with our human rights obligations, Australia must legislate for marriage equality.

Our elected representatives have the opportunity to create lasting and positive change that the community supports. It is time to legislate for marriage equality, and help close the health gap created by marriage discrimination against LGBTI Australians.

1. http://www.acon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Marriage-Equality-Evidence-Review_web.pdf; <https://ama.com.au/system/tdf/documents/Marriage%20Equality%20-%202017%20-%20AMA%20position%20statement.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=46077>; https://www.ranzcp.org/Files/Resources/College_Statements/Position_Statements/PS-83-LGBTI-mental-health-2016.aspx;

<https://mhaustralia.org/general/marriage-equality-statement>

2. <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2604258>

3. <http://lgbtihealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SNAPSHOT-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-Outcomes-for-LGBTI-people-and-communities.pdf>;

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/75106/report.pdf>



