



Life for lesbians in Australia has improved steadily over the years however restrictions and legal inequalities are still an issue for many of these women. For a large majority of same-sex couples the legal recognition of their relationships through marriage would address many inequalities between heterosexual and same sex couples.

A recent Galaxy poll on behalf of Australian Marriage Equality, found 60% of Australians polled were in favour of same-sex marriage. This shows a steady increase in support for same-sex marriage, from just 38% in favour in a 2004 and 57 % in favour in 2007. The same poll also came back with results showing that 58% of people agreed that same-sex marriages conducted overseas should be recognised in Australia.

When examined in a political context, the poll showed 74 % of Greens voters and 63 % of ALP voters support same-sex marriage.

In 2008, the federal government amended more than 100 laws to provide lesbian and gay couples with the same financial and work-related entitlements, including superannuation and pension rights, as heterosexual couples.

Whilst these developments were a move in the right direction for same-sex couples they did not extend out far enough to providing the financial equity realised through legally recognised unions. Civil unions are still not recognised in Australia by some employers and insurance companies.

Currently same-sex marriage has been legally introduced in seven countries - the Netherlands being the first in 2001. In 2004 the Howard Government, with the support of the Labor Opposition, amended the Federal Marriage Act to prohibit same-sex marriages occurring in Australia as well as the recognition of same-sex marriages from overseas.

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