



Currently, s 5 of the *Marriage Act 1961* defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, effectively banning gay marriage. Tasmania, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory, all allow a form of civil union, giving gay couples similar rights to married couples. The Rudd Government's recent *Same-Sex Relationships Act 2008* amended 84 discriminatory laws including social security, Medicare, family law and child support. The Government says that it is committed to ending all other discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, yet recently reaffirmed its anti-gay marriage stance at the Labor Party conference in Sydney. The Greens have proposed a bill to amend the *Marriage Act* to allow gay marriage. The bill is currently being considered by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

In 2008, Hallmark released a new line of Same-Sex wedding cards in response to "consumer demand."

Now **Angela Small** writes in hope that Kevin Rudd responds to his citizens.

**Angela Small**  
is a 24-year-old  
graduate law  
student at UNSW.  
She has been with her  
girlfriend for two and a  
half years and they are getting  
married (in all but the legal sense)

**Dear Mr Rudd,**

Firstly, let me just say that I am, by and large, a supporter of yours. I was particularly **proud** to have voted for your party in the 2007 election when you apologised to Aboriginal Australians for the many atrocities they have been subjected to over the past 200 years. Many people criticised your apology as being merely symbolic and lacking any substance, but I believe that symbols are important. Why not make another symbolic **gesture** and remove the so called 'ban' on gay marriage.

Really, Mr Rudd, if you **think** about it, you've already done the hard work. With the recent changes made by Same-Sex **Relationships** Act, you have, to your own admission, removed the discrimination from Commonwealth legislation. To be fair, it's not as if I haven't made any **sacrifices** on the path toward equality. I can no longer receive Youth Allowance while studying law because my partner's income exceeds the very low threshold. But I haven't complained, Mr Rudd, because **equality** involves such sacrifices. However, by the same token, you can't have almost equality. Equality doesn't lie on a continuum. It's an all or nothing kind of thing, and if you're stopping short of the right to marry, then that is what I would call **nothing**.

It's not as if it would be an unpopular decision, (and I know you value popularity). Sixty per cent of Australians **support** gay marriage. I know you like supporting minority groups, but this is just taking it too far.

Don't you see Mr Rudd, this isn't just about me. Although I would **love** for my upcoming wedding in October to carry all possible legal weight, this is bigger than me. This is about a teenager growing up in a small town, with small-minded people, who thinks they **might** be gay. This is about the suicide rate for young queer people being eight times higher than their heterosexual peers. This is about the **symbol**.

The symbol says homosexual love is not as valued as heterosexual love.

The symbol says homosexuals are promiscuous.

The symbol says gay people don't deserve the same rights as straight people.

The symbol says that Australia is a backward nation.

The symbol says your personal opinion should shape the will of our nation.

Yours Sincerely,  
**Angela Small**

P.S. **Malcom**, if you're reading this, I would happily switch teams for you (in the political sense obviously) if you were to support gay marriage. **Really**, at this point, what have you got to lose?