



Mr John Stanhope
ACT Chief Minister
Legislative Assembly of the ACT
Canberra ACT 2600

PO Box A147
Sydney South
NSW 1235
Australia

By Hand

alhr@alhr.asn.au
www.alhr.asn.au

Dear Chief Minister,

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) is writing to support your Government's commitment to eliminating discrimination against same sex couples in the ACT with the Civil Union Bill 2006.

ALHR is a national network of Australian lawyers active in practising, and promoting awareness of, human rights law in Australia. ALHR's membership of over 1,000 has active national, State and Territory committees including in the ACT.

ALHR firmly supports the Civil Union Bill and commends your Government for taking this step. The quarantining of legal unions for heterosexual couples denies lesbian and gay couples many basic human rights. Under the ACT Human Rights Act the rights contravened include:

- Right to Recognition and Equality before the Law (Section 8)
- Right to Take Part in Public Life (Section 17)
- Right to Privacy and Reputation (Section 12)
- Right to Protection of the Family and Children (Section 11)

Australia's obligations under international law and specifically in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights will be better met in the ACT after the passage of the Bill.

ALHR is saddened by the somewhat hostile response of the Federal Government to a Bill which will protect the human rights of many in the ACT. We will continue to support the Civil Union Bill 2006 and look forward to the ACT passing the Bill unamended.

Yours sincerely

Simeon Beckett
President
Australian Lawyers for Human Rights

Amy Kilpatrick
Convener ACT Committee
Australian Lawyers for Human Rights