

Family. A word everyone defines differently. Like cars, families come in different models. Some families have 2 parents, some have 1. Others have two dads while some have 2 mums. However, all good families have one quality in common, love.

Adoption Agencies should not be able to discriminate based on family composition. Up until September 1st 2016, same sex couples, single parents and couples undergoing fertility have not been able to adopt children. After lots of debates and news coverage, the law finally changed in Victoria, following changes in New South Wales, Tasmania, ACT and Western Australia. Soon after South Australia and Queensland followed, leaving the Northern Territory as the only place in Australia to not have legalised adoption for different family compositions.

Australia is in an adoption crisis, with Adopt Change studies reporting adoption rates in 2016 down a record 8% from previous years. The steady decline has resulted in 30,000 children in 2015 living in out of home care for at least 2 years. These poor children have lived in 2-10 homes, creating a less stable life, which correlates to poorer outcomes in life in health, education, employment and relationships.

"Removing children from their family of origin is a huge loss, even if that family of origin is abusive." quotes Helen Keevers, veteran child protective services officer. This illustrates just how important it is to find child who come from an abusive home a supportive and stable family, who will love them and give them the best chance at living a happy and healthy life. Independent research conducted by Adopt Change in 2015 demonstrated that 89% of people think that adoption provides a better chance at life than living in an orphanage. Adoption agencies must pick the best suitable family for this child, regardless of family makeup.

Craig Mack claims he would have been dead, in jail or following his mother's footsteps if it weren't for his two gay uncles. Craig was raised by a single mum, surrounded by drugs, bikies, domestic violence, child abuse, death and police raids. At the age of 15, Craig moved in with his gay uncle and partner of 25 years, where he finally got the love and compassion he deserved, in a stable and safe environment. Now, the child who could roll joints at age 6, has turned his life around and strongly supports same sex parents.

It is not who raises you or what their gender is, it's how they raise you that gives you the best life possible.

People working for faith based organisations, who follow conservative beliefs that do not support same sex couples, would be forced to break their beliefs in order to do abide by the law. However, if they were to follow their religion, they would be denying the innocent child the right to security and a loving family. After all, the children are the future of this world! Equality has come a significant way recently. It would be disappointing to see poor children living in orphanages as there is not enough people to adopt them as families, with unconventional situations, denied the opportunity to.

Faith has changed a lot recently. Now a lot of people follow a religion, however as the world is changing, so are their views and while they still follow a faith, they do not follow every single belief, as some of them are outdated in today's society.

A mother and father is required to give a child the best hope of succeeding in life is a common and outdated misconception against same sex couples and single parents adoption. Now, there are many other family makeups, and according to Child Trends, only 65% of children live with married parents. That means at our school, 560 students belong to families with different structures. A child could grow up with only one parent even if it was not adopted. Growing up with 2 loving parents, even if they are both the same gender, is better for the child than having just 1 parent.

Hope, a women raised by two father's quotes, "I don't feel like I suffered because I didn't have a mother."

There are other places in the community that children can get the feminine or masculine influence that they might not get from their home, such as family, friends, school, sport and community groups. The online world also plays a big role in today's society and is somewhere children can turn to.

The Gayby Baby is a project to raise awareness of "gaybies", as now 24% of same sex couples are raising a child, according to the Gayby project in April 2015. This means the children will not be alone, they will have others around them in the same situation.

Australia is known for its multiculturalism and diversity, so don't let it lose its name because it does not support a variety of family compositions and give them all the chance to raise children. We NEED to stop wasting precious time and money on this issue. The law has been passed, adoption agencies should get on with their job, WITHOUT PREJUDICE, allowing other social justice issues to be focussed on, making Australia a better place to live.

The typical family of today is changing, and many children are growing up in different family structures. Australia has more children available for adoption, than families available to adopt. Being raised by a loving family is vital to a child's development. There are many organisations out to support children raised by different families, particularly same sex couples. Ultimately, families should not be discriminated by adoption agencies because they are "different."