

From: John Frame

82 Main Avenue, Wavell Heights 4012

Phone: 07 3350 1562

email: jvframe@ozemail.com.au website: www.queerradio.org/AgeOfConsent.htm

Date: Wednesday, 7th September 2011

To: Premier Anna Bligh, Attorney-General Paul Lucas, and my local MP Neil Roberts.

Dear Honourable persons,

On 18th August 2011 I sent to each of you an email with the basic contents of the following letter. On 24th August my mother, who was in my care for the last 7 years, died in my arms in Royal Brisbane Hospital. I dedicate all of my future activism to the memory of Ellen "Vonnie" Frame – who was the most kind, compassionate, generous and loving person, and the very best mother anyone could hope for (although she told me in hospital that her own mother deserved that distinction).

In the 18th August email I forwarded to you a copy (further below) of a "Care2 Petition Site" call for support, which expressed international outrage that the African country of Cameroon could imprison men for 5 years merely for consenting sexual activity.

I asked how outraged would the world be if they knew that, for at least 11 years now, the Queensland Government has flatly refused to amend its Criminal Code to remove the 1990 law which imposes 14 years imprisonment for any young men aged 16 and 17 who have mutually consented to engage in sexual intercourse?.

Every other state and territory in Australia has acknowledged the logical and ethical sense of a truly equal age of consent, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and all had the moral fortitude to have amended their Criminal Codes by 2003. I believe that the Queensland Government's refusal to treat all youth with equity under the law is in itself an act of criminal neglect.

There is simply no reason which your Government can hold up to justify failing to enact equal age of consent reform.

The most recent communication which I have received from the Attorney-General's office was a letter from Senior Policy Advisor Tess Bishop on 6th July 2011 (as per http://www.queerradio.org/AOC060711_ex_Tess_Bishop_DJAG.htm).

Tess reiterated that the Government has no plans to act on equal age of consent reform, however this was also the first time that any correspondence from the Government had included the slightest attempt to argue the case for inaction.

Sadly Tess merely stated the very obvious – that age of consent laws exist to protect young children from harm, and that the fact that the Goss Labor Government decided to set a higher minimum age for anal intercourse when it otherwise decriminalised sex between men in 1990.

Tess failed to address the key reason why the age of consent ought be equal for all youth at 16 – which is that the Government's own [1990 Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee on Reforms in Laws Relating To Homosexuality](#) had officially specifically recommended that it be so. This is Recommendation 7, the only one of the Report's 9 Recommendations which was not applied in the resultant legislation.

Majority **Recommendation 7** of that Report (supported also by Chairman Peter Beattie) was that:

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE AGE OF CONSENT FOR HOMOSEXUAL ACTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF SEXUAL EQUALITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BE THE SAME FOR MALES AS IT IS FOR FEMALES, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THE SEXUAL ACT IS HETEROSEXUAL OR HOMOSEXUAL. (THIS PRINCIPLE IS HIGHLIGHTED IN POINT ONE ON PAGE 60 OF THE *(Criminal Justice)* COMMISSION'S REPORT.)

The [1990 PCJC Report](#) , on pages 44 – 50, justified Recommendation 7 by quoting from the testimonies of experts and others who had participated in the Public Hearings which were held on [6th August 1990](#) and [7th August 1990](#).

All of the required public and expert consultation has been done over 20 years ago to fully justify equal age of consent reform in Queensland. The only reason I can see for the Government not acting already is that they must not care enough about the welfare or rights of same sex attracted youth - and while that seems to have been proven by the stonewalling response by both the Beattie and Bligh led Labor Governments for the last 11 years, I'd like to believe that reform is still possible - and that logic and compassion will prevail.

So here's one more desperate plea for urgent, 20 years overdue, action to enact an equal age of consent at 16 - while you still have the numbers to ensure passage of the Bill. If you fail to do this you should all feel eternally shameful and personally responsible for any young gay or bisexual men who are self-harmed, infected with HIV or who suicide, purely because their Government insisted on defining the realisation of their sexual desires as being a profoundly serious criminal offense.

Any reply is welcome, a positive response is prayed for.

Yours sincerely,

John Frame

jvframe@ozemail.com.au

82 Main Ave., Wavell Hts 4012 Australia

Ph: (07) 3350 1562 / 0409 501 561

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---"There is no substitute for equality"---

Hi John,

In the West African nation of Cameroon, all citizens are vulnerable to incarceration **based only on their perceived sexual orientation.**

[Urge the Cameroonian government to ensure fair and equal treatment for all of their citizens.»](#)

Representing only one incident in many, two young men known as Jonas and Francky were arrested outside a nightclub on July 25, and charged under Section 347a of the Cameroonian penal code, which criminalizes same-sex sexual acts.

They could face up to five years in prison.

No one deserves to face jail time for being gay.

[Sign this petition to urge the Cameroonian government to repeal Section 347a and free Jonas and Francky today! »](#)




Thanks for taking action!

Ellyn
ThePetitionSite

Take action link: <http://www.care2.com/go/z/e/AgOx1/zl5D/tkiv>

Stop Discrimination in Cameroon!



Elin B. via Wikimedia Commons

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