

Like most Australians, I support the removal of discrimination against gay and lesbian people on principle. The idea that it is possible to support discrimination against a particular group when it comes to some laws, but not when it comes to others is illogical and unprincipled. There is no such thing as being “a little bit equal.”

Personally, I am affected by this legislation because I cannot legally marry my partner as we are both women. In one sense, the effect for me is not major because we would not choose to marry, even if it were legally allowed, but we are still significantly affected indirectly by the discrimination that is promoted through this legislation, the messages it sends to the society we live in, and the affect of those messages on our children. I find it absurd that in a secular state like Australia, a secular legal institution like marriage is imagined to be religious and therefore must necessarily be between a man and a woman, according to the law. It was distressing when this change to the law was made, as it was a betrayal of human rights as well as a section of the population; and it was unspeakably disappointing that both major parties supported such an unprincipled position in the interests of maintaining their popularity with some sections of the voting public.

It is very difficult to explain to our two children (who were born into our relationship – they are 12 and 5) why their mums, and all the same-sex parents of the kids they know cannot marry, according to the law. The logic of children is inexorable. Our parliamentarians should learn from it. Either people have equal rights; or they do not.

I hope the conclusion of this inquiry leads to the removal of all discrimination from the Marriage Act 1961 on the basis of sexuality and gender identity, and leads to legal recognition of marriage regardless of sex, sexuality and gender identity.