

It is pertinent to remember that only a decade or so has passed since Australia's last laws criminalising homosexual sex were struck down (in Tasmania). Already we look upon such laws as backward, even barbaric, just as any sane person looks upon the kind of law that made the marriage of Mildred and Richard Loving illegal in Virginia, USA, until 1967 as being inhuman and backward and a blatant breach of their human rights (refer to Loving vs. Virginia, 1967). My own father was a teenager at the time, as were many members of parliament- it was not a long time ago. But even today we still have laws that prevent same sex couples from getting married.

The comparison between the arguments made today against same-sex marriage and the arguments made mere decades ago against interracial marriage, as any Australian in such a relationship in the first half of the 20th century can attest, is a very fair one. The fact is that within living memory of many Americans and Australians, interracial relationships drew the ire of the law and of many in mainstream society, but almost no-one bar the most deranged and open of racists will openly speak their disapproval of such relationships today. The same phenomenon is set to occur with the issue of marriage between same-sex couples. As occurred with interracial marriage in the past, when the tide turns the people who support the laws that currently deny same-sex couples a right afforded to heterosexual couples will uniformly pretend that they had nothing to do with the legislated bigotry.

Where is the proof for the claim that allowing two individuals of the same sex to marry will undermine the marriages of opposite-sex couples? Have the so-called 'proponents of traditional marriage' offered up anything that would constitute evidence in this regard? It is a poor excuse indeed for a stance rooted in bigotry, and those who try it should be called upon to put up or shut up, as the idiom goes.

Just because a certain brand of bigotry has a certain level of support in the community doesn't make that bigotry right, and doesn't make it not a breach of someone else's rights. That was the case in the 1950s with interracial marriage, and it's the case today with gay marriage.

I am a married, heterosexual woman, and I would like to live in a society that does not withhold rights from an entire group of people based on their sexual orientation. I consider such laws as are currently in place an abuse of human rights and an oppression of a blameless minority grounded solely in the beliefs of another minority, namely religious bigots. Religious bigots do not constitute a political majority in Australia, where support for same-sex marriage exists among the majority of the population. Further, as already established, the moral case for a change in the law exists whether or not an existing majority supports that change.