



2 MARCH 2011

Marriage needs redefining

KATRINA FOX



The gay, lesbian and queer communities in Sydney are being called on to 'Say Something' during the annual Mardi Gras parade this weekend.

According to organisers, the right to marry is a dominant theme of a large number of floats. But campaigns in favour of 'gay' or 'same-sex' marriage ignore those [intersex](#), trans and other sex and/or gender diverse people who are unable to marry.



Many intersex people's sex is regarded as indeterminate at birth, with doctors often making the decision to surgically construct them into the appearance of stereotypical males or females and writing either an M or F on the birth certificate, even though their gender expression in later years may be contrary to their decreed sex. "So long as I have a sex on my birth certificate, as distinct to the gender I live, I am constrained by the same legislation that limits same-sex couples – that a marriage can only be between a man and a woman," says Gina Wilson, president of the Australian chapter of [Organisation Intersex International \(OII\)](#).

Simply allowing 'same-sex' couples to marry will still leave people like Wilson and many other [intersex, sex and/or gender diverse \(ISGD\)](#) people unable to access the same legal right. A more inclusive option is to allow individuals to get married whatever their sex or gender, including those who identify as having no sex or gender or whose sex may be indeterminate.

But it's not only gay, lesbian and ISGD people for whom matrimony remains an unequal playing field. Marriage places monogamy at its core and this is supported by both religious fundamentalists who are against same-sex marriage and those campaigning for gay and lesbian people to have the right to marry.

Yet according to authors Christopher Ryan and Dr Cacilda Jethá in their 2010 book [Sex at Dawn](#), monogamy may not be natural to humans. While reliable statistics on infidelity are hard to come by, the proliferation of adultery websites offering extramarital dating services is one indicator that the expectation of lifelong sexual bonding to one person 'till death do us part' may well be unrealistic for many people.

Surely it makes more sense to expand the definition of marriage to include a range of relationship models including [polyamory](#), instead of holding up monogamy as the gold – indeed only – standard. Contrary to myths that people in non-monogamous relationships are unable to commit, a poly lifestyle often involves a great deal of communication between partners and offers them an even greater level of intimacy and capacity to love.

"So many people are miserable in their relationships, and it's about letting go of false expectations that one person can do it all," says [sex educator Tristan Taormino](#), author of *Open Up: A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Open Relationships*.

"Non-monogamy is about exploring different parts of yourself. There's an assumption that people in open relationships have no boundaries, but it's quite the opposite. The way [open relationships] work and when they are satisfying is when people can recognise their limits and agree rules."

Marriage would also benefit from being expanded to include non-sexual, non-romantic relationships, like the existing [Tasmanian relationship register](#) which allows anyone who is in a "personal relationship involving emotional interdependence, domestic support or personal care" to register that relationship. After all if procreation and sex were an essential part of marriage, then infertile, non-libidinous and old people should be barred from walking down the aisle.

At last week's launch of the [Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival](#), longtime human rights activist [Peter Tatchell](#) talked about his proposed 'civil commitment pact', in which couples (romantic or otherwise) could create and choose from a range of rights and responsibilities to sign up to that are suitable to their particular relationship. It's a positive step in the right direction, except its focus is still on just one significant other.

I'm not suggesting we go as far to sanction people marrying inanimate objects like the [German woman who married the Berlin Wall](#) and was [utterly devastated](#) when her 'husband' was destroyed in 1989. Nor am I advocating marrying animals since they cannot consent, but simply extending marriage to reflect the broad range of loving relationships between consenting adults.

Modern marriage in Australia has, fortunately, moved beyond its patriarchal origins of treating women as the property of men. Vows nowadays rarely require a woman to agree to 'obey' her husband, and rape in marriage has been a crime for some time.

The campaign to extend marriage rights, albeit only to same-sex couples, has been boosted by New Mardi Gras, which has launched a [Facebook petition](#), and an [ad from lobby group Get Up](#) in conjunction with [Australian Marriage Equality \(AME\)](#). However pandering to religious fundamentalists who are hell bent on keeping marriage the sole domain of one man and one woman isn't the way to achieve marriage equality.

Campaigners from AME have been [exchanging letters with Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney](#), since December last year. In agreeing to meet with AME representatives, Pell insisted that they acquiesce to his demands to [publicly state that those opposed to gay marriage are not necessarily bigots](#). In addition to complying with his wishes, AME has also declared it is [acceptable for religions to refuse to marry people of the same sex](#).

These tactics have horrified many gay, lesbian and queer people, including me. It's hard to imagine any person of colour advocating for religions to have the right not to marry non-white people, so why some gay campaigners think so little of themselves and the broader queer community to sanction what *is* bigotry beggars belief.

In 2011 it's time to redefine marriage to include a diverse range of relationships between one or more people of any sex or gender (including not specified or indeterminate). Those desperate to cling on to outmoded traditions would do well to heed the moniker used by motivational speakers: 'Adapt or die'. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2009, the [crude marriage rate](#) (the number of marriages registered during a calendar year per 1,000 residents) in our country is now lower than it was 20 years previously.

Opening up marriage to be more inclusive, progressive and representative of the realities of our relationships today is not a threat to the institution, but rather an opportunity to preserve it.

Katrina Fox is a freelance writer and editor-in-chief of [The Scavenger](#).

109 COMMENTS

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Peter Baird :

02 Mar 2011 1:09:17pm

The answers are simple. Give us Gay marriage, stop stealing our taxes, and we in turn will get the Greens off your back.

•

James Picone :

02 Mar 2011 1:07:05pm

There's one big gap between monogamous and polyamorous marriage, and that's that any legal construct for the latter is going to be fantastically complicated.

At it's heart, modern marriage is a contract between two people concerning shared property and the like. And with just two people in the contract, the law gets pretty hard and also, sometimes, nasty.

Adding more people increases the number of connections exponentially, and that's when the law starts to get interesting. What happens if one person in a three-person polyamorous marriage wants a divorce and the other two don't? Presumably the shared goods, etc. are split 2/3 to 1/3, but it could get pretty nasty.

This isn't necessarily a reason /not/ to have polyamorous marriage, of course, just a reason why people don't discuss it as much.

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Sarah R :

02 Mar 2011 12:57:06pm

I think that we should take the whole concept of marriage out of the legal framework. Marriage is about love, legal relationships are about property. They don't have to be the same thing.

People could still marry if they wished in whatever personal or religious ceremonies they chose, subject to the belief or practices of particular religious organisations as relevant, but this should have no legal status.

A church or other religious organisation could therefore choose to marry a couple or not as it saw fit, but it would not affect their legal status in any way, and if they chose not, the couple would be free to find another organisation who would marry them, or to have a non-religious ceremony with no legal standing.

For a relationship of any sort (sexual, romantic, companionate, caring etc.) to have legal status, it would need to be the subject of a civil union, which would be available to anyone wanting to register such a relationship. This could include marriages, but not be restricted to them. People who wanted to marry but not have a legal relationship could do so; people who wanted a legal relationship but not to marry could do likewise.

The whole concept of legal marriage is just a furphy.

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Dave :

02 Mar 2011 12:23:08pm

For all of those who think that it is a blight for the government to redefine marriage, I would ask them to state the definition of a voting Australian citizen in the 1920's. You can bet that 'female' and 'aboriginal' were not part of that definition. Our lawmakers exist to change the definitons of certain concepts to best represent the will of the people. If anyone has seen the latest polls, the will of the people is most definitely in favour of gay marriage.

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Reader1 :

02 Mar 2011 12:11:49pm

Chuck marriage altogether. Religious or conservative types can do it under the radar like the polygamous Mormons of Utah.

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David :

02 Mar 2011 12:02:46pm

If you don't like what marriage is, then don't get married! Call your relationship something else, but why do you want to change the nature of what marriage is to suit yourself?

Does marriage need to 'adapt or die'? If you change the definition, then you kill what marriage is.

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DocMercury :

02 Mar 2011 11:52:42am

It is a pity we're not more like fish and insects.
To breed, one or both parents must die.

•

DocMercury :

02 Mar 2011 11:50:51am

Sentimental rubbish!!

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Tom :

02 Mar 2011 11:48:14am

Your final paragraph indicates, and recommends a change in the long held definition of the word marriage, ie, a union between a man and a woman. This does not go down well with a lot of people, even those without religious or political beliefs, or prejudices against same sex couples. Call a same sex union something else, and seek the same lawful rights.

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David :

02 Mar 2011 11:44:12am

I just want to support Spek's comment - the law should deal with civil unions. Churches, or other religious-ethical entities, can deal with marriages.

Our problem stems from the law attempting to regulate "marriage" - a religious-ethical concept. The "Marriage Act" should be changed to the "Civil Union Act" - end of controversy.

I think the Gay Movement wants the law to intervene in the definition of marriage - it would be a lot tactically smarter to get the law OUT of marriage, altogether.

•

leone :

02 Mar 2011 11:40:49am

We need to get rid of the ancient superstitions that form the basis of the current 'rules' on marriage.

Marriage was invented because someone worked out that limiting men and women to just one sexual partner would mean less inadvertant copulating with close relatives and less babies being born with webbed feet or two heads. Humans were understandably reluctant to go along with such restrictons. The only way to enforce this was by shrouding it in religion and superstition, so we got all the guff about marriage being mystical, sacred, a manifestation of a god's love for mankind and a whole lot more. Those who still believe all that can have the full church ceremony in the faith of their choice, those who don't can opt for a civil ceremony, those who want to marry someone of the same sex should be able to do so without a bunch of religious nutters frothing at the mouth.

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kim :

02 Mar 2011 11:36:53am

Im lesbian, I want to get married to my long term girlfriend. I dont care if legally its reffered to as a "civil union" thats fine. In my private life I will still refer to it as my marriage. I would like all the same legal rights and security too.

Just allow LGBT couples to have a legal civil union and we will be happy. Not that hard is it?

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Evan Hadkins :

02 Mar 2011 11:30:44am

It's quite beyond me why people want to do marriage.

I was hoping the marginalised would invent a different way. It seems they want to buy into the old way.

I understand their choice - my partner and I got married because it made our lives easier with Centrelink.

•

EMH :

02 Mar 2011 11:28:18am

I think this is an argument that begins, and ends, in ignorance.

There are many examples of monogamous relationships in nature, and many of polyamory in nature. I have no idea where science might lead on how humans should mate although the fact that children take so long to become independent might be a pointer. As may be the fact that before science, before enlightenment, adults lived about long enough to raise a child or two and then tended to drop dead, through disease, accident or being hunted by other species for food.

For myself, the idea of trying to find another companion if my partner died is profoundly unattractive and very likely I could never find one any way.

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Trench- Mouth :

02 Mar 2011 11:24:11am

Apart from re-definng it. Could it also be subject to some kind of star rating which we already have in place for fridges, washing machines etc? If those white goods had anywhere the failure rate of marriages, gay or sad, all marriages would be banned. For any contemplating exchanging rings, go and spend a day in a Family Court. That place really rocks. No wonder the woman in Berlin married a wall. I suppose, here in Australia we ought to consider conjugals with Zinc Alume.

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Ailsa :

02 Mar 2011 11:17:13am

Mostly this is rubbish. I feel sorry for ISGD people, I don't have any better ideas for them. I disagree with polyamory relationships, as we're already seeing the result of this, with people living together, having kids, breaking up, moving on to the next relationship, having kids, and the cycle keeps going and most times the tax payer is picking up the bill. Kids are not having any family life. I believe this is being very selfish. Kids need continuity & routine and to feel secure, with their parents. I know a lot of people will say that plenty of monogomous relationships have major problems, and at times they sure can do, however it does also take commitment. I have been married for over 32 years so I have experience. Now as grandparents I think if the grandkids can't come and visit "memma & poppy" we're all missing out on something special.

•
Roy G Biv :

02 Mar 2011 11:16:16am

You last paragraph seems a bit like advocating that a church building (or museum building for the secular) be turned into a department store in order to "preserve it". Sure it'd still look like the old building, but it wouldn't necessarily still be a church (or museum).

In general, I don't have a problem with anything you propose...but:

1. I reject the liberalist argument that society should have no say in what is essentially a social institution (I'm not sure you made this point, but it is widely implied in these discussions so I'll address it anyway). I think that society should allow gay (etc) marriage, but that is still in a framework in which society has a (big, possibly ultimate) say. If you didn't care what society thought of your relationship, you'd just label it however you wanted and society be damned. You're effectively asking for society's blessing, so you really should listen to the answer (which might change with time and prodding).
2. Demanding to be brought into the tent of the word "marriage" does strongly imply that you accept that what is currently defined as "marriage" (monogamous heterosexual legal bonding) is somehow the core of the institution (let alone a cursory examination of the historical/anthropological purpose). Therefore gay marriage would be "allowed" in by moving the boundary outwards. Once again if that were not the case, you wouldn't care whether that inferior mono-hetero term "marriage" were applied to your more preferable relationship.
3. You seem to be arguing marriage out of existence, to be replaced with legal recognition of whatever boyfriend(s)/girlfriend(s) you happen to be pursuing at any given moment. Why not just allow people to legally nominate anyone they chose to get/share their super (etc) and then shag whoever they feel like? Why does the term "marriage" have to even come into it, especially when it still may be somehow precious to those in the traditional core of the institution (as explained above)? Is it because you only want that particular toy because they're playing with it at the moment?

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Jenny :

02 Mar 2011 11:04:08am

Marriage is already define. One man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. It does not need redefining.

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Glen :

02 Mar 2011 10:58:31am

I think this article is really feeding the "Slippery Slope" argument that people have against allowing Gay Marriage. The argument being: "If gay people can get married, what next, a man can marry two wives, or an animal ? Its a slippery slope when you change a definition"

I think the problem here is that "Marriage" is considered something to aspire to and our lives goals are to be married, and all people must be able to get to be married. Perhaps we just need to change our perspective a little, marriage is something some people choose to do. Its not for everyone, some people do, and alot of people don't.

I get the feeling the problem is with people not happy being "not married", rather than people wanting to be "married". I wonder how long it would be before we allow a single person to be "Married", because they don't want to feel left out, its unfair on those too ugly/poor/isolated to get a partner of any gender. I think people need to be comfortable with not being married.

Also I haven't figured out what people are after with marriage:

Is it the ceremony? surely you can invent a ceremony without government backing.

Is it being recognised by the government? Just register as a joint venture non-profit business, declare all assets (including children :P)

Is it changing your last name? Do it anyway.

Is it because if the government changes the definition people will accept you and your partner/s? Well some people will never accept you anyway. People have a right to have their own opinion of whether to accept you.

I personally don't like the idea of a man having multiple wives. I fear an arrangement like that is oppressive to women.

And really for non-monogamous relationships you don't need the governments OK, you just need your partner/s. That's what swinging is all about isn't it?

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RCB :

02 Mar 2011 10:55:49am

I hope our de facto PM Brown is reading this. Polyamory will be the next thing he will want in Australia. Slippery slope here we come!!!!

•

Andrew :

02 Mar 2011 10:47:36am

Katrina, your rant against so-called bigotry amongst those you lump into the religious camp with your enormously broad brush completely fails to even try understanding the position from which they are coming.

Typically, you characterise these people as "choosing" to be "intolerant" of your collective position. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As a Christian my beliefs are formed and informed by the teachings I find in the bible. As faithfully as I can, I live out my life on these principles. Some of them might not be what I would choose given my druthers but if I am choosing to believe that this is God's word, then I can hardly pick and choose which bits I like and which bits I don't. So, if the bible teaches me that same sex relationships are not in God's best plan for us, or that marriage is between a man and woman, then it's not an option for me to take a different stand.

This is the point.

My stand is determined by the unarguable and clear teachings enunciated in scripture. Now, I understand and accept that not everybody places

the same value on the bible that I do; I don't demand that you agree with me - that would not make sense since you are not coming from the same starting point. BUT - for you to demand that I change my position in order to agree with you, or to accommodate your beliefs, violates the foundation of my faith. It is simply not possible for me to choose differently and still be faithful. If you're going to be shrill and strident about tolerance, how about you tolerating my beliefs to the same degree?

Like it or not, our society is founded on Judeo-Christian principles and our laws reflect those values. This is a historical fact and it shapes who we are and how we order our collective lives. It's a valid question to ask whether we should continue this influence; perhaps as a society we need to ask how much we value that heritage and whether we want to discard it in favour of something new. That's a bigger question than we can tackle here and requires considered and courteous debate, and diligent thought. But for now, it is what it is; tinkering with vested interests that run counter to the grain of that heritage fails to understand the context in which we operate as a society. Whatever the vested interest, it is unlikely to succeed without addressing that context.

•
WAKE UP :

02 Mar 2011 10:47:33am

Katrina,

You know what? The problems of Western civilization are not just social, political, educational or economic -- our problems are wholly moral ones! It's because you people are perverting the purpose and the design of true meaning of Marriage!

•
buttercup :

02 Mar 2011 10:46:42am

The Bible has not changed its text over thousands of years in regard to marriage being between a man and a women. I still believe that.

If same sex people want the legal benefits of being "married" then they should have the law changed so they can cohabit and get a share of the partners wealth after death or breakup.

Marriage is a covenant before God and not a reason to be joined together for financial benefit.

•
Godly Values :

02 Mar 2011 10:31:06am

People will seemingly try anything in the attempt to find someone they can truly share their life with for the long term. Why is this? With all of the social experiments in cohabitation, open marriages and so forth, many people assume that marriage is passé. Why does the goal of finding a long-term compatible life companion remain an ideal worth striving for? How can one escape the hopelessness of the dating game and the emptiness of the singles scene? The answer, quite simply, is that—contrary to the assertions of social evolutionists—male and female roles in the institution of marriage were not developed by man, but were created by God Himself as we read in Mark 10 where Jesus tells us: "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (vv. 6-9).

God intended that man and woman form a bond for life through the institution of marriage and family. But in today's chaotic society, how does one go about finding a life-long companion the way God intended? Numerous studies have shown that marriages based on shared values stand a much greater chance for success than those based on any other single factor. Shared values provide a context for the definition of the roles of both of the marital partners, as well as a context for resolving the inevitable conflicts that arise in any human relationship.

Since God is the Creator of marriage itself, it stands to reason that the shared values we need to find in any successful relationship are not just any values, but the values of the Creator of marriage: God Almighty. We are told in God's Word that there are proper priorities we must follow to gain His favor and to be able to understand His will in our lives. In Exodus 20:2, God said: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." God plainly tells us that to succeed in building a proper foundation for marriage, based on His values, we have to put Him first. In putting Him first, we also put His instructions for our lives first: His laws and His instructions in His Word must come way ahead of anything and everything else. The Bible is God's instruction book for His creation. In it we have the opportunity to pursue understanding of the principles God has provided for living a successful life. With this strong foundation, we are then prepared to find a life-long "soul mate" who shares those same values.

Gary Coe :

02 Mar 2011 10:30:23am

Brilliant article Katrina. If only we could get George Pell and other bigots to read Anne Fausto-Sterling's book "Sexing The Body", to a point where they can quote it verbatim as well as they can their outdated religious texts.

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Kevin :

02 Mar 2011 10:25:22am

I find it amazing how deviates can latch on to one publication and quote it forever as gospel.
And, of course, the ABC will run with those quotes.

▪

SofaMan :

02 Mar 2011 11:56:11am

"I find it amazing how deviates can latch on to one publication and quote it forever as gospel"

Yep, that sounds like Christianity.

▪

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 12:06:29pm

I'm trying to work out who the "deviates" are to whom you are referring, and the "one publication" that they have latched on to.

I guess the giveaway is the term "gospel" thrown in at the end.

But I think you're being a bit harsh on the Christians, they're not all "deviates"

:)

▪

pete :

02 Mar 2011 12:17:37pm

who is a deviate? Just because someone may say something you dont agree with, doesnt make them a deviate. Tony Abbott, Scott Morrison say a lot of things I dont agree with as does Kevin Rudd Jlia Gillard and you, but I dont regard any of you as deviates. At worst, on occasion you all lack information about issues that will stop you from arriving at a balanced viewpoint, which is currently your problem

▪

tom :

02 Mar 2011 12:18:35pm

I take it you're talking about the New Testament, Kev, where those earlier deviate Christians concocted and then latched on to. And its nonsense is still being pedalled 2000 years later!

▪

that man :

02 Mar 2011 12:19:56pm

You are referring of course to the bible. I agree, the deviates are still quoting it after more than two thousand years.

- **Gordon :**

02 Mar 2011 10:24:50am

Structures like marriage are societal constructs built around a biological core of a mating urge that is self-evidently highly and wonderfully diverse. It is foolish to deny others a harmless happiness on some historical cultural principle. If societal recognition of someone's domestic arrangements makes them happy then count me in. I fear however the law of unintended consequence. The result of a rapid move to a more inclusive approach is that those who feel differently will soon erect a new structure, called say "proper marriage" or "real marriage", that is exclusive to their traditional feelings, and the gay, lesbian, ISGD, and Berlin-wall-attracted among us will be once again pressing their newly-married noses to the window of a domain they thought was finally theirs.

- **I think I think :**

02 Mar 2011 11:58:10am

As long as the right to join the real marriage is open to every human being, there shouldn't be any problems.

- **sinesurfer :**

02 Mar 2011 12:21:17pm

I'm all for equality, but I think you might be a bit delusional if you think legislation will change people's views. But really, does the view of people who don't like your marriage, and who will never accept it matter (provided that is that the state doesn't discriminate legally)?

Thus as far as religious organisations go, I defend their right to define what marriage is, within the confines of their religion only. If your religion/denomination won't marry you then you need to question whether you really belong there at all. I think legislating to change that would be an infringement on the separation of religion from the state.

- **bootneck :**

02 Mar 2011 1:18:51pm

Yes marriage is a social construct and a contract under law. If we did away with marriage and a lot would argue why not then why not have threesome or multi partner unions. Would it matter to the children who their parents were. I think it would and does very much matter. That's why we have marriage between men and women to give stability to our children and in turn to society.

- **Jeff Poole :**

02 Mar 2011 10:24:16am

Well said!

I've been watching the whole palaver about gay marriage with increasing disbelief. After all we got the same rights in ever area that matters in November 2008 - the only thing left out was the M-word itself!

So why are many queers crying out for the 'right' to wear a long white dress? I don't see how it's advancing equality one millimetre by muscling into a fundamentally discriminatory institution like marriage and then locking the door behind us to keep out the polyamorists , the celibate and anyone else who doesn't conform to the abstract and failed 'couples only' model.

It's well past time marriage became a small and decreasing segment of legally recognised relationships of interdependence. Let the religious loonies keep it - the rest of us can move on to something far better!

- **pete :**

02 Mar 2011 10:24:15am

Who cares? this is such an insignificant topic. I dont understand why politicians from both sides dont just let it happen. If gays want to get married, let em.

There are far more important things for us to be concerned about. maybe those holding the high moral ground should look at the deception of Gillard and think about the message that this sends to our youth.

•
Spek :

02 Mar 2011 10:22:03am

Why don't we just take the concept of "marriage" out of the civil statute and everyone (straight or gay) can have a "civil union" as the legal status of their relationship.

If they want to get "married", then this is a religious ceremony and they go to the religious organisation of their faith or choice to arrange this.

if there is no religious group that will sanction their kind of "marriage", then perhaps they can set one up that will.

I just don't see that this debate will get anywhere as it operates now.

▪
Seanr :

02 Mar 2011 11:59:03am

I tend to agree Spek, call them civil unions, with all the same legal rights. The religious can 'marry' if they want too but it provides no other benefit.

I know some Christian denominations allow gays to marry in their churches so it is not like all the religious are against it.

▪
Joe :

02 Mar 2011 12:06:53pm

Does a wedding celebrant have to be a priest, reverend or other religious figure, in order to have a marriage license issued and the for marriage to be considered legal? No.

Does a marriage have to take place in a church or other religious institution, in order to have a marriage license issued and for the marriage to be considered legal? No.

Does a marriage have to take place during a religious ceremony, in order to have a marriage license issued and for the marriage to be considered legal? No.

Does a marriage have to be performed by a celebrant, who is authorised by the government to perform a marriage, in order to have a marriage license issued and for the marriage considered legal? Yes.

Therefore, a marriage has nothing to do with religion and it is simply a legal document.

▪
that man :

02 Mar 2011 12:22:13pm

It wasn't the civil law the usurped the word marriage. It is the churches who have butted in and demanded the right to perform ceremonies for their sheep.

Marriage is first and foremost a civil contract. The religious stuff is an overlay for the religious.

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Hudson Godfrey :

02 Mar 2011 10:21:52am

Katrina, you're the one supposed to have more credibility on this and yet in terms of what the headline screams in particular I think you're off target about this. And I say that while strongly supporting gay marriage.

Firstly I think that the current definition of marriage supports a number of values including shared love, fidelity and the kinship enjoined when two people commit of partnership for life. So I don't think the strong equality argument is about changing that at all. It is really about recognising what it is that it is shared between ANY adult couple. The challenge therefore is to take equality by breaking down an invalidated and unjust exclusion within the existing secular public institution.

Adding gay straight or intersex into a list of the labels that we put upon one another just perpetuates the problem that we have with those labels. One impractical libertarian part of me doesn't even want the State to define marriage, but then in a world of practicalities where it reaches out to even define de-facto relationships as marriages by proxy real equality means defining marriage as a human right with as few other labels as possible.

It is also clear to me that people with religious objections really aren't being persuaded to change anything about those institutions if they don't wish to. I think an increasingly sizeable non-religious segment of society are more or less aligned in favour of gay marriage, while many religious people seem to fail to grasp that choices which don't affect them should be left to an agency of conscience that we've all the right to exercise regardless of our faith.

The one area where the article really does confuse me is in quibbling about monogamy. We all know that some people prefer more or less open relationships, and thank goodness that crimes of adultery have long been taken out of any public statutes. I just don't think that the state will readily invite the trouble of negotiating are the various and complex (often disputed) bonds of kinship within non monogamous relationships. And nor does there appear to be strong public support for extending marriage beyond couples. Perhaps it is just that the move to recognise gay marriage is progressive enough in itself so as to stretch our social fabric within reasonable limits for the moment, because when it comes down to equality I think the standard of like meets like with the existing institution of marriage has to be met first.

▪

Seanr :

02 Mar 2011 12:10:43pm

Actually Hudson this article will confirm the suspicions of many marriage proponents that people like Katrina will never be satisfied...gay marriage then polygamy then allowing consenting adult family members to marry etc

I personally believe that if two consenting non related (call me old fashioned) adults want to get 'married' they should with all the same legal rights.

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bravo :

02 Mar 2011 10:20:40am

Katrina, You raise some great points. If we say marriage is no longer between one man and one women, then what justification do we have for continuing to limit it to only 2 people? What is so important about gender to marriage? Maybe it is time to look at civil commitments for everybody. I wonder if Marriage Equality of Australia will put this on its website?. I am reminded of the Chesterton quote which I paraphrase to apply to marriage....When society stops believing in marriage as a heterosexual union, society can believe that any union is marriage. Who are we to say it isn't?.

•

Peter :

02 Mar 2011 10:20:13am

The premise of Katrina's argument here is clearly faulty. It does not follow that "Consent" equates to either a civil right or a morally sound decision. There are many activities and behaviours people consent to that are quite destructive and unhealthy. What about the consent of the children who will invariably be raised without a mum and dad? Perhaps instead of ridiculing those who are concerned over such developments as old fashioned bigots, it might at least be helpful to honestly consider what consequences will follow this proposed reengineering of one of society's most fundamental institutions.

▪

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:46:46am

You need to be VERY careful in linking marriage to children; for by attempting to establish that the purpose of marriage is procreation you are, by default, invalidating every marriage that does not result in children - including the marriages of those heterosexual couples who cannot or choose not to have children.

•

John R :

02 Mar 2011 10:16:51am

It would seem easier and more logical to coin a new term for this new class of relationships. To avoid all the dramas and confusion about redefining a word, "marriage" could then just be the name of one form of relationship within the new framework, serving only to denote the type, rather than being a status. People then who don't support the restrictions of that categorisation would simply not desire it anyhow.

•

Pompey boy :

02 Mar 2011 10:15:31am

Surely there are other pressing matters in the world to worry about in the world other than who can marry who! Life must be good if this is the best complaint we have...get a life...

▪

that man :

02 Mar 2011 12:26:20pm

There are always pressing matters, and we are quite capable of addressing more than one at a time.

For gays like me, this is also a pressing matter. So pressing, in fact, that my husband and I went to Canada and got married there.

•

HC :

02 Mar 2011 10:13:43am

Katrina,

You obviously hold a progressivist understanding of history.

You believe this history discard innumerable superstitions and prejudices on its long journey towards justice and fairness.

You believe our generation is morally superior to the generations that precede it.

You hold a narrative which identifies oppression & believe marriage needs restructuring for human flourishing.

You hold a radical individualism, with rights liberties and responsibilities.

You demand the total right to define yourself, especially in terms of gender and sex.

You believe you have the right to bend any moral code to your own individualistic demand forfeiting any moral obligation when they conflict with yourself.

You see all moral principles as social constructions, where moral principles give way to new insights and understandings.

You have correctly identified interracial marriage laws as an example of prejudice, cloaked in the language of moral certitude.

You also infer all enduring morals laws and principles are tools of oppression.

You see a moral mandate to liberate marriage from its heterosexual limitation.

BUT THIS IS ONLY ONE NARRATIVE

I know throughout human history, moral principles as objectively true and inviolate.

I understand the universe is ruled by a moral law established by a divine Lawgiver and Judge.

I know human life is only possible within the context of enduring moral laws and principles that liberate all human beings to their true humanity

I know natural marriage as a liberating, God given institution for human flourishing.

I know there is precious little shared ground in this debate

I know our Creator established our identity before we came to know ourselves.

I know that true happiness can only come by embracing with gratitude the identity we are given by the Creator.

I know the concept above is anathema to the modern mind, but calling me a bigot isn't an argument simply abuse.

I know the release of the destructive forces of expressive individualism can only be opposed with moral obligation and the goodness of true self-knowledge.

I know that the therapeutic world view from which many drink has recast the human experience as individual self-discovery and self-definition is both faulty and destructive.

▪

honest truth from honest ruth :

02 Mar 2011 11:43:08am

Couldn't have said it better myself

▪

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:50:33am

Your point? In that long and meandering post you failed to provide any justification for opposing either same-sex or polyamorous marriages.

Personally I support same-sex marriage - it is a subtle, and minor, change and reflects the reality of the many long-term same-sex relationships that exist throughout society.

I am yet to be convinced about polyamorous marriage - and I believe this article fails abjectly to justify why they should be considered.

But either issue has nothing whatsoever to do with religion; because religion plays no role in marriage.

▪

bluey brown :

02 Mar 2011 11:58:49am

Isn't it odd that Katrina only "believes" or "sees" whereas you "know"? I know bombast when I see it.

Another thing I do know is that Katrina doesn't "infer", she "implies". You infer. So I guess you don't know everything.

•

Helvi :

02 Mar 2011 10:13:20am

How about if we all cocentrate on better realationships between men and women, between gays and straits, between young and old, Aussies and foreigners, Laborites and Liberals, town and country...

Let's start respecting and valuing each other, give a miss to devisive jurnos, haters, Hansons...

If we get good marks for our behaviour, we can start talking about marriages between man/woman, woman/woman, man/man...and finally we might not need divorce lawyers, and we'll all live happily ever after.

End of the fairy tale.

•

Tim Wodetzki :

02 Mar 2011 10:05:06am

Thank you for a well researched and broad ranging analysis of some of the issues surrounding the current Marriage debate. I think you have done what so few people seem to do, by not getting drawn in to the emotive positions that seem to dominate the debate, while still presenting a compassionate insight some little known problems.

From my perspective, the main point of conflict on the future of marriage is the blurring of the boundaries between religious practice and legal rights. Some people see the problem as one of equal rights. Some people see the problem as one of corrupting traditions. The fundamental incompatibility between the two seems intractable.

Religious traditions need to be respected, but not at the cost of human dignity. This shouldn't be about "sides" winning. A position I think you presented well.

Thank you.

•
Glen Hu :

02 Mar 2011 10:02:15am

Katrina,
So you are not a serious writer but write to insult.
Good for you.
Who has ever heard of The Scavenger?
Why don't you write about the bare bones of a subject and be serious.

•
RB :

02 Mar 2011 10:02:06am

The truth is out. Gay marriage is the doorway and slippery slope to the total destruction of committed monogamous heterosexual marriage, an institution that best upholds the stability and health of a society.

The facts are: most de-facto relationships don't last very long, 90%+ of active homosexual men are not monogamous, and Lesbian couples have far higher rates of domestic violence. If Katrina gets her way, the depravity and chaos and brokenness of modern life will be given public sanction. What a mess.

▪
kim :

02 Mar 2011 11:38:55am

And 54% of all heterosexual marriages end in divorce.

▪
rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:52:38am

You forgot to mention the plagues, locusts and fire and brimstone that will rain down upon us.

As for "committed heterosexual" relationships - it's such a shame that so so many of them end in bitter divorce ;)

•
Ima :

02 Mar 2011 9:57:51am

You may want to redefine marriage but I don't agree. I was married under the legal definition of marriage about 20 years ago. Any change now doesn't just allow others to use the term, it also redefines my relationship. Marriage is between a man and a woman and nothing else. Marriage is ordained by God and is something that shouldn't be messed with. If you want to include others in recognised relationship with the same rights

then create a new term and stop trying to redefine my relationship and all other married persons relationships.

■

kim :

02 Mar 2011 11:40:21am

Who cares if your marriage is then re-defined as between two consenting adults, rather than "between a man and a woman" are you really that pathetic that you would allow that to upset you?

■

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:54:00am

How is something that includes the loving relationship of an adult couple who happen to be of the same sex redefining your relationship?

It isn't - as you well know.

■

Glen :

02 Mar 2011 12:12:51pm

I tend to agree with you. Although I haven't been married for 20 years.

But I'm sure someone will call you ridiculous or a bigot, or old fashion.

It sounds marriage is important to you. And that's a great thing. Perhaps others don't put the same gravitas on marriage as you and feel changing a definition to make some people happy is OK, which is shallow and offensive to those it is important.

It's the same idea of playing musical chairs with too many chairs, that way nobody loses. So What's the point of playing?

If everybody can marry anybody(s). What's the point of marriage?

Keep marriage important for those it is important. If it's not important to you, play a different game.

■

that man :

02 Mar 2011 12:30:40pm

Twenty years ago The Marriage Act did not define marriage as being between a man and a woman. That only happened when the homophobic Howard thought he was king of Oz.

If gays can get married as well as you it will not affect your marriage in the slightest. There are already plenty of married gays in the world (and I am one and so is my husband) - has your marriage fallen to bits as a result?

■

HonkyTonks :

02 Mar 2011 12:49:57pm

Doesn't it strike you as a little sad that the definition of marriage might impact or redefine on your own relationship? Is it really that weak to begin with?

■

Spek :

02 Mar 2011 1:14:58pm

Sorry Ima, marriage is only "ordained by God" if it takes place in a religious setting like a church or mosque or temple etc.

That is where marriage belongs and should be offered to people who support the rules and values of that institution.

What the Commonwealth of Australia should be offering is a "civil union" to anyone who wants to register a relationship, regardless of their religious beliefs or sexuality.

I agree with others, we have spent way too much time on this topic already.

▪

BMU :

02 Mar 2011 1:21:28pm

So because marriage is ordained by God, your religious views should shape Australian Law.

Some religions view polygamy as Ordained by God, but I am sure you would have problems about that.

Marriage is more about the Legal and Social constructs, these days than the religious, as many Australians do not hold any religious views.

•

Paul C :

02 Mar 2011 9:54:24am

Hear! Hear! Love is love and should be recognised and accepted as such, no matter what a person's sexual orientation (or lack thereof). There is absolutely no rational basis for the continued claims that a 'traditional' male/female relationship is better than any other.

•

Chris Maddigan :

02 Mar 2011 9:47:43am

It is good to see that comedy is still alive and well on the Drum! It does make it difficult though for those who would comment. After all how do you parody a piece that is a perfect parody of itself?

Let anyone who claims that gay marriage would not damage the institution of marriage read this piece. A definition of marriage that includes everything includes nothing at all.

ps. What does the author have against necrophiles, surely these relationships that even go beyond "till death do us part" are worthy of being classed as marriages.

▪

Sarah R :

02 Mar 2011 1:00:59pm

Surely the issue would be that corpses can't consent, and nobody's arguing that marriage shouldn't be consensual.

•

Pearl :

02 Mar 2011 9:46:01am

I think what you're suggesting is not the broadening of marriage but the development of a whole new institution which has little to do with the traditional, religious institution of marriage, and probably shouldn't be called the same thing.

In Ancient Rome they introduced 'new' marriage laws which had a new set of rules, including legalising divorce, without abolishing the old system. People could choose which to be married under.

Marriage here and now is very different to what it was in Ancient Rome, but maybe we could benefit from a similar, dual system.

-

John :

02 Mar 2011 9:43:49am

If you disagree with Katrina you will be called a Bigot. So why bother commenting?

-

I think I think :

02 Mar 2011 12:01:45pm

No, if you think that GLBT people are somehow not worthy of your rights (e.g. marriage) you will be called a bigot.

And rightfully so.

-

Merlin 23 :

02 Mar 2011 9:43:37am

"Opening up marriage to be more inclusive, progressive and representative of the realities of our relationships today is not a threat to the institution, but rather an opportunity to preserve it."

The only problem is the term 'marriage' is already used by a number of religions for a specific meaning. In the Catholic Church its even a sacrament on the same level communion and reconciliation. I understand why they are taking such a strong position on it.

An alternative may be use the term 'civil union' for everyone which invokes all the legal aspects (such as superannuation and precedence in a will) and simply recognise that a marriage, defacto or whatever is just a specific version of a civil union.

-

that man :

02 Mar 2011 12:33:17pm

Churches do not own the word marriage. Marriage is a civil contract first and foremost. The churches have added their little bit of flavor to it for their sheep; and what they have added is irrelevant to anyone outside their church.

-

Mark Harrigan :

02 Mar 2011 9:34:14am

Wow - this article challenged my whole concept of marriage.

But, I cannot think of a single moral or logical reason why the broader definitions of marriage it offers cannot be used, with some caveats.

As long as the marriage is a commitment/relationship between consenting adults, no matter what gender and no matter how many, who am I to oppose it?

The key words are consenting adults - such a definition should not be used to justify the sort of multiple partner marriages found in cults which are usually found to be a form of slavery and oppression of women, often very young. If we can figure out a way to avoid that problem I say go for it.

-

Bruce Thombo Jefferson :

02 Mar 2011 9:21:08am

While I would support opening marriage to any adult persons who wish to enter into it regardless of their sex, I am cautious about changing the standard format of one partner only. Not because I think we are bound to be faithful to only one person for life etc but because, casting ones eye

around the models of polygamous cultural institutions in the world, women are the losers in those situations. By all means live as you wish but creating what appear to be prisons by formalising it is another matter.

•

bear :

02 Mar 2011 9:19:11am

ummm, i'm not sure which campaign you have been paying attention to, but all the 'same-sex marriage' advocates i know are in fact arguing for marriage between any two adults, irrespective of sex or gender, which would therefore include trans/intersex marriage. as it should. the question of polyamory is a separate one and not the one currently being debated - except by religious fundamentalists who use it to argue against 'same-sex marriage' in the first place. it is unfortunate that by conflating the two you are encouraging their scare-mongering.

▪

Seanr :

02 Mar 2011 11:51:25am

Doesn't look it is scaremongering now though does it bear, from Katrina's viewpoint more like a logical progression

▪

Chris :

02 Mar 2011 12:38:12pm

"the question of polyamory is a separate one and not the one currently being debated - except by religious fundamentalists who use it to argue against 'same-sex marriage' in the first place."

And honest ethical polyamorists who believe that it is possible to love more than one person, and maintain more than one loving relationship.

•

Politically Incorrect :

02 Mar 2011 9:17:27am

One thing I don't get about Gillard is she maintains this stance yet does not suffer from religious delusions. As far as I have seen, I have only ever seen religious people oppose gay marriage.

I guess there is a reason they are called a 'flock'.

▪

stewiegriffin @:

02 Mar 2011 11:56:52am

In Gillard's defense, Party policy is chosen by and endorsed by the Party. She can no more arbitrarily stand up and say, for example, "I have just decided to propose a paid parental leave scheme funded by a tax on big business and I have not consulted cabinet" than she can say "Labor now supports gay marriage". Democracy, eh?

•

that man :

02 Mar 2011 9:15:07am

That bully Pell is a disgrace and a blight on this country. He is the classic example of why many people think 'religious bigot' is a tautology.

Marriage should be available for any adults who want to be married.

•

Gidupngo :

02 Mar 2011 8:58:01am

My only question of Katrina is.. Why on earth would anyone want to get married. Oh, it fits into the lawyers and priests scheme of things. However its an archaic practice and doesnt fit into modern life.

■

Dummo :

02 Mar 2011 11:16:00am

Why are so many men opting for permanent bachelorhood? Bachelor Carl Weisman, author of *So Why Have You Never Been Married?: Ten Insights into Why He Hasn't Wed*, surveyed 1,533 unmarried heterosexual men, and came to some startling conclusions.

Ten out of 11 of these men said they were more frightened of a bad marriage than of remaining single. Those without much money felt they had nothing to offer a bride, while financially successful bachelors feared losing their wealth in an expensive divorce. Four out of ten said they did not want the responsibility of parenthood. Men prefer being solo over a bad marriage: study, Reuters, June 2, 2008).

What can be learned from this – and how do these men's attitudes affect our society? Millions of today's unmarried adults grew up in single-parent homes, or in dysfunctional two-parent households. Some never knew a father; others knew only a distant or violent parent. Growing up in a world where sexual desires can so easily be gratified outside marriage, millions see no need to take the risk of marrying when they can have the "benefits" for free. But is "free sex" really free? Unmarried women who "sleep around" and emulate the "Sex in the City" lifestyle often find themselves entering middle-age with no steady relationships – and with reputations that make them unmarriageable. Similarly, how many men perpetrate a double-standard, happy to "play the field" – then rejecting as marriage partners those women who do the same?

God abhors this chaos! He established marriage – between one man and one woman – as the basis for each family, as the union meant to provide a safe and loving home where children can be nurtured and grow into responsible adults. He considers it no small thing when a marriage fails. "And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 'For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,' Says the Lord of hosts. 'Therefore take heed to your spirit that you do not deal treacherously'" (Malachi 2:15-16).

Divorce statistics nowadays are appalling! Though the population is growing, its number of marriages continues to decline. Divorce often brings poverty to one or both separated spouses, and is a major factor in children growing up in poverty. It often breeds emotional trauma and resentment in the children of divorced parents.

Even the Republic of Ireland, long known for its conservative attitude toward divorce, is seeing an upsurge in marital breakups – there are more than 60,000 divorced people in Ireland, with many more legally separated. Tough economic times are one reason for the trend. "When money looks like flying out of the window, love walks out of the door," commented a member of London law firm Mishcon de Reya. British law firms say they are "besieged" by wives wanting to secure good financial set

■

LTaylor :

02 Mar 2011 11:43:18am

Where marriage becomes useful is when things go wrong, particularly in cases of divorce or death or worse (dementia, severe brain damage etc).

What happens with children, property and/or medical decisions is usually determined by the spouse. This is a very strong reason to support marriage for all couples.

Imagine the situation of a gay couple with one of them in a serious accident. As legislation currently stands the decisions regarding medical care would be made by the gay person's family with his/her partner not having any legal standing. What if those parent's did not accept their child's relationship? That's hardly unheard of in the gay community.

It's also one of the reasons against legal recognition of polyamorous relationships: the legislation around these issues becomes an order of magnitude harder to deal with.

■

BMU :

02 Mar 2011 1:07:39pm

There are many legal and financial reasons why people wish to get married.

Property Rights, Medical, Inheritance, Taxation, Custody, and more.

An example could be of a same sex couple who have a child, one partner dies, and rather than the custody going to the surviving partner, the others family could claim custody, even though they may have been estranged and it would not have been the wish of the deceased partner. This happens. Medical decisions may be taken away from partner if their rights are not protected by Law. Same Sex marriage is about equal rights.

•

Grandad :

02 Mar 2011 8:46:10am

I have another suggestion.

Use a different word (or words) to describe the unions of partners of the same sex.

That's what we do for other things in life that are not the same.

A horse is not a cow, a cat is not a dog, and a union of a same-sex couple is NOT the same as that of a marriage between a man and a woman in all the ethnic and religious traditions that I know of.

We DO NOT need "re-defining" of marriage.

Use another word!

▪

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:25:19am

How is the union between two men, or two women, any different to the union between one man and one women?

Surely the basis of marriage is love, and a desire of a couple to spend their life together?

How is that any different for same-sex marriage as it is for heterosexual marriage?

Of course it isn't.

FYI - marriage has nothing to do with religion; it was around before the modern religions came along, and it'll be around long after they're gone.

▪

LTaylor :

02 Mar 2011 11:45:01am

How? How is it different?

There are more things the same about heterosexual and homosexual relationships than there are things that are different.

▪

I think I think :

02 Mar 2011 12:03:25pm

'A horse is not a cow'

This is the level the debate needs to be aimed at?

▪

Chris :

02 Mar 2011 12:39:54pm

"NOT the same as that of a marriage between a man and a woman in all the ethnic and religious traditions that I know of."

By that argument, all the people who get married by civil celebrants should not call themselves married either?

-

gerard :

02 Mar 2011 8:42:47am

Good article Katrina.

I am glad to hear that we should not go as far as allowing marrying animals or objects. That poor woman married to the wall in Berlin must have been so devastated when it all went down.

You can only imagine the plight of Humpty Dumpty we he fell down.

I still miss my much loved Leghorn.R.I.P.

-

lopati :

02 Mar 2011 12:27:23pm

That was just stupid, if animals can't consent to marriage how the hell did the Berlin wall consent?

Lets just redefine "gender" and all associated words like "male" and "female" to make them have no meaning. Heck, let's just cut to the chase and redefine "different," and all words of the same defintion to mean "same," ultimately reducing all words in the entire language to have only one meaning, Of course that question can't be answered because "yes" means "no" means "yes" anyway.

-

Dane :

02 Mar 2011 8:40:39am

Why do you need to keep calling it marriage? Marriage is for believers of God. I think even most gays and lesbians will agree with this. They want legal rights, which is fair enough, not marriage. Stop trying to drum up attention by using the term 'gay marriage'.

-

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:29:11am

"Marriage is for believers of God"

Really?

That must be a huge surprise to all the atheists who have gotten married!

That must be a huge surprise to the vast majority of people who have held a wedding and got married without any involvement of any religion whatsoever!

Most importantly, that must be an even bigger surprise for the Federal Governemnt of Australia, which legislates marriage via the Marriage Act - an Act of Parliament that makes no mention of "god" or that there is any pre-requisite in believing in one before you can get married.

I think you need to go and do a bit of research before making silly (and incorrect) statements about religion and marriage.

-

Craig :

02 Mar 2011 11:40:14am

Marriage: it's for the religious only! Allowing atheists to marry in a registry office should be banned, right?

-

LTaylor :

02 Mar 2011 11:52:34am

I don't believe in God yet somehow I'm married.

Marriage in Australia is a legal institution covered by a federal act. The fact that it's also a term used by some religions is immaterial.

If you feel that it should be a religious thing than I suggest that *you* come up with a separate term for religious marriage and stop registering your actual marriage with the government.

■

HonkyTonks :

02 Mar 2011 1:11:22pm

That is incorrect. Atheists can get married, agnostics can get married... and isn't it a massive leap to suggest that gay people do NOT believe in God?

•

Hung One On :

02 Mar 2011 8:32:03am

" In 2011 it's time to redefine marriage...." Sorry, no it isn't.

Also I'm not a religious fundamentalist as you keep harping on in your article but I don't want my marriage undermined by gays and lesbians or the other group.

■

rob1966 :

02 Mar 2011 11:22:58am

The good old bigots line of "..I don't want my marriage undermined by gays and lesbians.."

Come on. Educate me.

Please explain how two men getting married, or two women getting married, would undermine your marriage in any way whatsoever?

Is your marriage so fragile, so weak, or so lacking in anything that two men getting married is going to result in you getting a divorce?

Of course not. You are just peddling the standard, unsubstantiated bigot's line that "same-sex marriage will undermine marriage".

■

kim :

02 Mar 2011 11:31:02am

How will a gay couple getting married, undermine your marriage? Please explain

■

Shelly :

02 Mar 2011 11:38:36am

How does gay people marrying have any effect on your marriage whatsoever? Are you suddenly going to value your marriage less because gay people can get married too? And if you do that, you're undermining your own marriage - noone else is.

■

I think I think :

02 Mar 2011 12:04:41pm

What does your marriage have to do with it?

Perhaps if you paid a bit more attention to your partner, you wouldn't need to be worried about the crumbly clay feet of your marriage.

■

that man :

02 Mar 2011 12:37:23pm

My husband and I went to Canada and got married there. How has our marriage undermined yours?

■

BMU :

02 Mar 2011 1:14:08pm

How does Same Sex marriage undermine your marriage?

All it does is provide them with the same rights and responsibilities you have under Australian law. I can not see how it in any way affects your relationship or marriage.

It would take away none of your rights or legal protections, it cannot change you or your partners commitment to each other, it does not affect your responsibilities to each other or your children.

Can you please explain exactly how it undermines your marriage?

■

Malice In Wonderland :

02 Mar 2011 1:14:15pm

I don't understand how your marriage could possibly be "undermined". Surely the sanctity of your marriage is something only you and your partner should be concerned about.

Marriage is technically a civil contract. There is, thankfully, no law in this country which requires a religious component to make it "lawful".

How you choose to define your marriage is a personal matter. Why deny others the right to their own definitions of marriage or write their own "marriage contract"?

I'm completely secure in my "straight" marriage and see no threat of having it undermined by allowing the definition of the institution to be broadened to include alternative lifestyles.

•

Michael :

02 Mar 2011 8:23:38am

Wow! someone talking about polyamory on the ABC. You are right it's not just about couples. Us people in triples relationships have to be more discreet than gay people.

■

Chris :

02 Mar 2011 12:40:55pm

"Us people in triples relationships have to be more discreet than gay people."

Well except for the 100 of us who will be marching in this Saturday's Mardi Gras parade!



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