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VoxLink

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Labor attacks babies and free speech

The Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 is expected to be introduced into Queensland Parliament on August 16.

The legislation from the Queensland Labor government is a revamped version of a number of changes originally proposed in 2016 by independent Cairns MP Rob Pyne, which were ultimately considered too extreme by all political parties.

However, some parts of the new bill are even more extreme than the original Pyne bill. The proposed exclusion zones, stamping out pro-life speech or signs up to 50 metres outside abortion clinics, would be extended to 150 metres under the new legislation, as is the case in Victoria and ACT (see *Consitutional challenge*, page 4). The new laws also compel Queensland doctors to refer women for an abortion, and thus violate the conscientious beliefs of many doctors.

The bill allows for sex selection of babies, and approval for abortions to full term with only one other doctor's approval, potentially obtainable over the phone. There will be no protections in place against coercion or forced abortion, and no requirement for counselling to take place to gain informed consent, despite the fact that abortion has serious mental health implications for many mothers who go through an abortion procedure.

A baby's heart starts pumping at around six weeks. At eight weeks old it is already able to react to touch. By 11 weeks the baby is almost fully formed so that it can kick, stretch and even hiccup, while it is capable of seeing light and hearing noises from outside the womb at 16 weeks. Babies can also experience pain at 20 weeks gestation, although some scientists believe they can experience pain earlier than this.

International statistics show that the most common reason for seeking late term abortions is for fetal abnormalities, most commonly Down Syndrome. Cherish Life Queensland has labelled the provision to allow abortion up to full term based on social circumstances "a con job to try to trick the Queensland public into thinking there will be an effective restriction on late-term abortions, when in fact it will legalise the killing of healthy viable unborn babies".

A 2017 YouGovGalaxy poll demonstrated that 73% of Queenslanders opposed abortion after 23 weeks. 85% opposed sex selection abortions, which will be legal under the new legislation.

The Queensland Labor Party has actively championed abortion decriminalization, with Deputy Premier Jackie Trad most vocal about her desire to change the laws.

"I'm very passionate about abortion law reform because, fundamentally, it is the last area of discrimination against women. To think that in 2018 women can't access an abortion unless they're mentally incapable of having a baby is ridiculous," Ms Trad argued.

It is unclear how laws supporting sex-selection abortions could help to defeat discrimination against women. There are also no safeguards in place to help protect women from coercion to end a baby's life.

The Katter Party has already vowed to oppose the laws, labelling human life 'sacrosanct'. It has also undertaken to lobby other parliamentarians to reject the legislation.

In a statement to News Corp, Mr Katter said, "We will be opposing Labor's attempt to weaken the laws and doing everything we can to lobby other MPs, both LNP and Labor, to be vocal in their opposition".

Under Labor's legislative plan the numbers of abortions each year are likely to increase, with the figure already standing at around 14,000 per year.

A summary of the draft Labor Bill, as sighted by VoxLink:

1. Abortion for any reason up to 22 weeks gestation, including for sex-selection.
2. Abortion from 22 weeks to birth, if two doctors consent, and the second doctor who provides consent does not need to see the woman or her file. Full term abortion may be approved merely for "social" reasons.
3. No safeguards for women. No cooling-off periods, informed consent conditions or independent counselling is in the Bill.
4. Always free abortions in public hospitals. Abortion-as-birth-control will be legitimised. The Bill grants women "control of our reproductive destiny," according to Deputy Premier Jackie Trad.
5. Doctors with conscientious objections are forced to refer for abortions.
6. 150 metre prohibition on free public access outside of abortion clinics.

March for Life in Brisbane on September 1

Pro-life supporters will gather at Queen's Park in Brisbane to resist Labor's attack on unborn children and vulnerable women

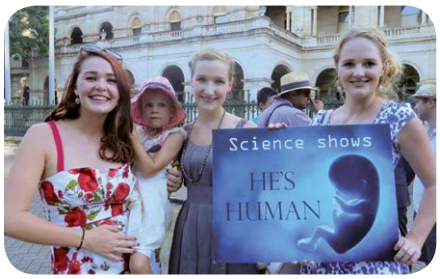
The Queensland pro-life community has scheduled a special March for Life this year to specifically march against Labor's extreme late-term abortion Bill.

Supporters are being asked to gather at Queen's Park at 144 George Street, Brisbane on September 1, with the march beginning at 2pm.

The Bill would allow abortion for any reason (including sex-selection abortion) to 22 weeks gestation, then 22 weeks gestation until birth for a range of loose criteria including "social" reasons.

The Bill is on track to be introduced on August 16 and voted on the parliamentary sitting week of October 16.

The march is a key time for those who love life to take a public stand ahead of the vote.



‘Language madness’ restarts in Defence Force

The Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) LGBTI guide may intrude on the military preparedness of its 80,000 personnel.

ADFA is reportedly using the guide to educate officers in training about ‘correct pronouns’ for LGBTI members of the military, and advocates the use of gender-neutral language. Former Australian Prime Minister John Howard labelled this as “madness”. “You don’t protect a minority by rubbishing a majority,” he said.

The guide outlines the importance of being “mindful of respectful and disrespectful behaviours or language in relation to LGBTI members”. This includes “avoiding stereotyping” and making use of “the correct pronouns and preferred name of sex or gender diverse members wherever possible”. In addition, members are to use “gender neutral language when referring to relationships or gender identities.”

One statement insists that “misgendering” often expresses “non-acceptance of that person’s identity”. This may indicate that Defence members are expected to remember and use the practically unlimited gender identities that members of the military may construct for themselves, even during war situations.



How to birth a pro-life culture

The powerful ‘LOVE’ approach was presented by Michelle Macormic, a keynote speaker at Perth’s Love Them Both rally this year. Changing social acceptance of abortion takes more than just changing the law. This approach, first developed by Heartbeat International, helps us to understand why a woman might consider abortion and how to help her make a better decision.

If we are to see less abortions, we need to compassionately, generously and creatively offer to meet the needs of women considering abortion. It is a movement of LOVE. It is hard work. It is expensive – it takes time, money and vulnerability. It takes a society who are willing to stop arguing and start listening.

L is for Listen and Learn

Please give her the gift of a listening heart. Lean in and give her reassuring eye contact. Please resist telling her what you think she should do. Keep it about her.

Be gentle, but ask good questions. What is she most worried about? She may have concerns that are physical, emotional, practical or spiritual. She may have issues in her past that are shaping her reaction to her present situation.

Ask her about her strengths, and listen for signs of them as she tells her story. She is so brave for talking to you, and by admitting she needs help, she has shown she is humble and wise.

What are her beliefs, her values, her dreams and plans? If she is very upset, it may help her if you suggest she think outside her current predicament. How did she feel about her future before she was in this situation? If she was helping a friend in a similar situation, what would she advise her to do? By helping her step outside her distress and panic, you are helping her to think clearly and feel safe to keep working through her tears.

O is for Open Options

Use what you have learned from her to share in a loving and caring, non-judgemental way about her different options – find out what she knows, offer factual information and correct misunderstandings.

Be objective rather than emotional: avoid shocking her, respect her boundaries. Suggest she consider the immediate and long term benefits and consequences of each choice. Focus on her life – you cannot help her or her baby without her permission, and if you help her, you are helping both!

V is for Vision and Value

Help her to see herself differently: that she is beautiful, valuable, unique, strong, worth fighting for, deserving of hope, peace, joy and love, created in the image of our wise and loving Father who sent His Son to redeem her (but wait to share about Him until she asks!)

Awaken a vision in her for a healthier, healed, whole life. Help her to see that she deserves better than abortion, abuse, abandonment, being used, coercion etc. Demonstrate that she is capable of making choices that honour herself and the little life that she carries.

E is for Extend and Empower

Explain that you will be there for her as long as she needs your help. Offer personal and additional support available through services that you are aware of that are relevant to her needs.

Help her to find support through her family, friends and community. Empower her to start solving her own problems. Remind her that she is never alone. Come up with a plan – what does she need to do next?

What do you need to do next for her? If you don’t have all the answers, admit you’re unsure but offer to find out so you can learn together. Arrange follow up care. Make promises you can keep, and keep them. Because when you love the woman, you love them both!

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Call for positive religious freedom protections

Two members of the Turnbull government are pushing for positive protections for religious expression in the public square.

Social Services minister Dan Tehan demanded the Turnbull government do more to protect religious freedom in Australia during a speech he gave in Canberra in June. His comments followed those by Victorian senator James Paterson who, though choosing to vote 'yes' during the same-sex marriage debate, supported increasing protections for religious freedom at the same time.

Recent comments by Father Frank Brennan (of the Ruddock review panel) could indicate that the Ruddock review may not lead to clear, positive protections for religious freedom in Australia, such as a Religious Freedom Act might afford. Instead, Brennan stated that laws may only need "tweaking" to shore up protections for the exercise of religious belief after the passage of same-sex marriage laws.

Tehan's speech could act as a warning to the Prime Minister that members of the parliamentary party are expecting robust provisions for religious freedom.

"There is another threat to religious freedom," Tehan argued. "It comes from what former Prime Minister John Howard calls 'minority fundamentalism', which he describes as 'the assumption that long-held custom, practices and beliefs represent or imply an attack on those who do not support (them)'.

"The liberal political virtue of tolerance does not legislate for morality. Instead, it separates law from morality and allows for freedom of conscience and actions, yet Australia has reached an unusual point where the tools of oppression — sowing the seeds of division, conquest, manipulation and cultural division — are being wielded by the minority against the majority. We now live in a society where tolerance is subjective."

Amnesty International's submission to the Ruddock review called for the removal of religious exemptions in anti-discrimination legislation where religious groups are recipients of government funding for public services. Schools are currently free to employ only people who conform to faith based ethics and ideals around sexuality or gender. Amnesty International asserted that government funds should not "contribute to discrimination".

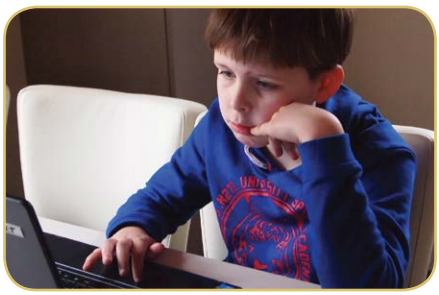
The human rights organisation has called for a federal human rights act, but strangely enough, aware that parliament will not support that move, is willing to support a religious freedom act.

"It's a funny position for Amnesty to find itself in to be in furious agreement with conservative politicians, but we do believe that a lack of a religious freedoms act is the obvious gap in our human rights architecture … We've got freedom from racial discrimination but not on religion. While Australia is a secular society it's an international human right that should be protected," a spokeswoman said.

Exemptions currently represent the only clear line of defence for religious organisations against accusations of discrimination, especially in relation to Biblical views about gender and sexuality, and in a lot of ways even exemptions represent inadequate protection.

Opt-out filters aren't censorship

By Charles Newington



Some activities are permitted by authorities that are frankly indefensible. Exposing children to violent and depraved pornography is certainly one of them. We are not talking about something relatively inoffensive. Children may access shocking images and video that corrupts their imagination and stay with them for life, affecting how they think about sexuality and human intimacy generally.

Proposing opt-out child-safe internet filters is not censorship by stealth. It is limiting the corruption of our children that is occurring by stealth. Many parents are blithely unaware of what their children are exposed to.

Opt-out filters remove porn websites out of the general internet feed offered by the Internet Service Providers (ISPs). To access porn, a person would have to show an Over 18 ID and opt in to access porn websites. Accidental discovery, as happens often with children, would be greatly reduced.

A mandatory child-safe opt-out internet filter is a careful step towards minimising the harm of porn on minors. It is comparable to the existing ban on any online site from offering alcohol for sale to a minor. A website offering to send alcohol to minors would be charged with an offence. Legislating fines against websites who illegally provide sexually explicit material to minors is no different.

Internet websites are proprietors, and some online bottle-shops get around the "credit card" block by offering their product freely (to later gain paying customers). The government currently holds the bottle shop responsible, but not an internet porn website proprietor.

Some might say "the problem is too big". Yet this argument doesn't stop most Australians from supporting a ban on bottle shops selling to minors, even though underage drinking is a serious problem.

Help FamilyVoice campaign for sensible internet filters by signing our Open Letter to the PM and by supporting this campaign financially. Go to ***Cleanfeed.fava.org.au***.

This really is nation-building stuff – allowing children a safe online childhood, protecting their imagination and changing how they relate to others for the good. That's the Australia every decent person wants.



- New Cleanfeed Campaign launches
- Pray as the Religious Freedom Review results draw near
- Spreading the word!

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Why the Lord's Prayer matters



The Greens are again seeking removal of a daily Scriptural verse from the Australian Senate.

Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon has instigated a Senate inquiry into removing the Lord's Prayer from the beginning of Senate sittings, and has proposed a new mantra: "Senators, let us in silence pray or reflect upon our responsibilities to all people of Australia and to future generations".

FamilyVoice SA State Director David d'Lima in a written submission to the inquiry noted: "The recommendation that Parliament abandon its custom of opening with Christian prayers, in effect, is a rejection of the fundamental or foundational role of Christian wisdom".

NSW Christian Democrats MP Paul Green has argued that the Lord's Prayer "simply highlights the values that we as politicians and we as citizens of this great nation should seek to embody in our everyday life. We are not in total control of our destiny and we should always seek to forgive, serve and love those around us".

The prayer is also an important signpost pointing to the Christian foundations of Australian law and common law.

Tony Abbott recently argued, "Our society is unimaginable without a deep sense of the dignity of every person; without the conviction that we should do to others as we would have them do to us; and without an ingrained sense of our duty to protect the weak while encouraging the capable. All these have a Christian inspiration" (*The Spectator Australia*, 4/8/18).

A humorous, tongue-in-cheek response by Queensland pastor James Macpherson was published in *The Australian* (4/7/18):

*The words of Jesus are dangerous and politicians should be protected from hearing them lest they startle the country by governing with wisdom and humility. '**Our Father who art in heaven**' is a shocking acknowledgment that the highest office bearers in the land may not be the highest office bearers in the universe. Should politicians realise this, they may start acting with humility and become completely unrecognisable to their own electorates.*

*'**Hallowed be thy name**' is the dangerous admission that we must live for something bigger than our own name or self-aggrandisement. '**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven**' could cause politicians to consider if perhaps they ought to act according to noble convictions rather than simple convenience. This would throw the public service into significant confusion. '**Forgive us our sins**' is a self-esteem-sapping admission that none of us are perfect. This is a dangerous idea that our MPs should never under any circumstances be allowed to contemplate lest they stop thinking of themselves as our betters. '**But deliver us from evil**' is the foolishly outdated idea that evil exists when we know the problem is really structural issues that can be fixed by constant government interference in the affairs of free men. '**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory**' is an insidious idea that may lead politicians to wonder if perhaps building monuments to themselves is mere vanity.*

We don't want MPs thinking there is a cause greater than their own name or political stripe, lest they begin to work together for a greater good; and then where would we be?

Constitutional challenge to "safe access" speech ban

John Young summarises the submission made by a pro-life campaigner's legal team to the High Court of Australia

In 2017, Kathy Clubb was found guilty in the Melbourne Magistrate's Court of breaking the law when she offered a leaflet to a couple about to enter the Wellington Parade abortion facility. The magistrate stated: "There is no evidence of duress or violence of any kind. The engagement between the Accused and the couple is brief and appears polite."

Despite this, the magistrate found her guilty and fined her $5000. In a submission to an ongoing High Court appeal, Kathy's barristers have outlined a number of reasons why the verdict should be overturned, the principal one being that Kathy's action was political in character and is safeguarded by the right to political discourse guaranteed by the Australian Constitution.

The barristers argue, "To change one's mind on the ethics of abortion is apt to change the person's mind on the politics of abortion. Further… protest on the topic of abortion outside abortion facilities is also inherently political, particularly when 20 police officers are present."

The law is also criticised for its vagueness. "It is inherently difficult to predict whether conduct is apt to cause distress or anxiety, particularly once those concepts extend to mere discomfort… There is no bright line between communications which are in relation to abortion and those which are not. Is a communication seeking a vote for a political party the speaker knows to be pro-life a communication in relation to abortions?"

The limits of the "Safe Access" are inherently unclear. For example, if abortions are provided at a large hospital or at a university or shopping complex, does the 150 metres extend beyond the limits of the hospital or just the building or room where the abortions are provided?

The prohibitions applies: (a) to any communication relating to abortion that is be able to be seen or heard (whether or not that occurs); (b) whether or not the recipient consents; where drug abortions are administered, which includes private residences; (c) whether or not distress or anxiety is in fact caused, or intended; (d) to communications by Members of Parliament and during election periods and referendums; and (e) where the communicator is seeking to discourage a person from obtaining an unlawful abortion.

Kathy's barristers ultimately argue: "What the law does, in fact, is to burden one side of the abortion debate more than the other. It discriminates, and it distorts political communication. And it does so to a viewpoint that is properly described as a minority viewpoint."

