A state newsletter of

FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

VoxLink

South Australia

August 2018

Euthanasia bill voted down

FamilyVoice State Director David d'Lima explains why the Senate rightly rejected the Liberal Democrat's Bill to give territories the legislative power to legalise euthanasia.

On 15 August the Upper House of Federal Parliament narrowly upheld the two-decades ban on death by lethal injection, following a vigorous campaign by pro-life organisations that warned against euthanasia.



By David d'Lima

But it is thoroughly disconcerting that Senators in 2018 felt the need to re-visit this life and death issue.

No new evidence had come to light to promote euthanasia, but there are examples of the terrible consequences.

There are the cases of three children in Belgium who were legally euthanised in 2016 and 2017. A nine-year-old was euthansied for having a brain tumour and an 11-year-old for having cystic fibrosis. A 17-year-old was killed due to suffering from muscular dystrophy. Among the 4337 Belgians euthanised in that period, 19 were aged 18-29.

In 2016 it was reported that in Oregon that almost half the people who died after taking lethal "medicine" took their fatal decision so as not to burden others. The oft-repeated mantra about autonomy and individual rights is thoroughly fictional when we realise people are making decisions because of perceived problems for others.

But the matter becomes even more problematic when we consider the burdens faced by the dying and their families. Moral burdens would arise if a dying person were to ask the family for its views on choosing between a quick, cheap injection - and the option of longer and expensive palliation.



Euthanasia emanates from a culture of death, rather than a culture of life

The dying person, to protect the family from soul-searching and heated quarrels, may decide to bear this burden alone and opt for sudden death - not realising this can seriously prevent the resolution of grief. Such a sudden departure can eliminate the possibility of family members reconciling, healing emotional hurts, and resolving unfinished issues.

But natural death, when managed well by modern pain relief and palliative care, often gives greater opportunity for "closure", saying good-bye, and for seeking and receiving forgiveness and reconciliation.

Consider also the legal burdens that would arise as more people become the victims of those who would deliberately take life without consent. Laws that should punish such people are only enforceable if witnesses lay charges and testify in court - but this asks too much of the bereaved, who must bear silently the burden of non-action against those who commit (or suggest) homicide.

Finally, there is the shift in culture, whereby the will to prosecute and to convict is undermined once the principle of "do no harm" is breached.

Parliament did well to consider the research into the seven people who expressed interest in dying by lethal injection when euthanasia was lawful in the Northern Territory. A *Lancet* journal paper by Kissane, Street and Nitschke (October 3, 1998) found none of the seven people experienced intolerable pain. Instead, "Fatigue, frailty, depression, and other symptoms contributed more to the suffering of patients."

The Territory certainly has plenty of fatigued, frail and depressed people who greatly need encouragement and support, but not euthanasia. It is home to a large population of our beloved Indigenous people whose difficulties are many and whose vulnerability is deeply concerning.

As the Northern Territory is a creation of the Commonwealth, the Federal Parliament has wisely voted to protect all Territorians, and especially those who are vulnerable, from the multitude of harms linked to the legalisation of euthanasia.

Health Minister opposes euthanasia

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt has spoken out against the push by Senator David Leyonhjelm to grant ACT and Northern Territory the right to legalise euthanasia.



Greg Hunt MLA

In reaching his decision, Minister Hunt said he was particularly concerned for older Australians.

"I don't support euthanasia in Australia for the very simple message that it sends to older Australians about how they are valued," he said.

The Australian Medical Association and palliative care specialists across the country remain opposed to legislation allowing euthanasia or assisted suicide.

A doctors' group from WA is concerned that the proposed Restoring Territory Rights (Assisted Suicide Legislation) Bill would lead to the implementation of assisted suicide and euthanasia regimes in the territories, which would then spread to other states. Victoria has already passed euthanasia laws, which will come into effect in 2019.

"We are grateful to live in an age and a country where palliative care is an accepted and integral part of end of life care", said Dr Lachlan Dunjey, a spokesman for the WA group.

However, he added, "The ACT and NT are much smaller populations than the States each with 25 MPs – only 13 being needed to pass legislation – and lacking the protection of an upper house of review, this facilitates passing of legislation inimical to the welfare of Australia as a whole."

The group believed it was only appropriate for the Federal Government to overrule laws that sanction the killing of people. The Federal intervention was also justified because euthanasia "weakens the national push to reduce suicide in Australia."

‘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 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!

PUBLISHER:

FamilyVoice Australia
4th Floor, 68 Grenfell St, Adelaide SA 5000
phone: 1300 365 965 fax: 08 8223 5850
email: office@fava.org.au www.fava.org.au

PUBLISHED:

March, May, August, November

EDITOR:

Charles Newington

EXTRACTS:

Articles or extracts from VoxLink may be used for other publications, provided that the reprint includes the following notice:
“Reprinted from VoxLink by permission of FamilyVoice Australia, www.fava.org.au.”

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".

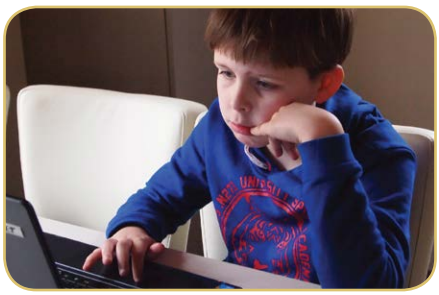
The human rights organisation has called for a federal human rights act, but strangely enough, aware that parliament will not support that move, is willing to support a religious freedom act.

"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!

+FavaOrgAu /familyvoiceaustralia

☐ I would like to subscribe to *FamilyVoice* publications ($66 per year, $33/yr conc.). Please find enclosed cheque or debit my credit card:

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Expiry /

Cardholder:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

P/code:

Phone:

Email:

Please return to: **FamilyVoice Australia**
4th Floor, 68 Grenfell St, Adelaide SA 5000

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."

SINCE 1975
IVAN BUTLER
Family Funeral Directors
A Comforting Name in Funeral Service
8261 8211
All hours
www.ivanbutlerfunerals.com.au
enquiries@ivanbutlerfunerals.com.au
AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
26 OG Road Klemzig SA 5087