The national magazine of

Family Voice AUSTRALIA

VoxPoint

February 2016



The school bullying problem

Also inside:

- *The elephantine iceberg in the room*
- *Senate to investigate porn's harm to kids*
- *Why All Of Us will not help all of us*

Editorial

The elephantine iceberg in the room



Last year we celebrated 50 years of happy marriage. We thought that was quite an achievement – until some supporters told us they had recently celebrated their 70th anniversary!

For us and countless others, marriage – the voluntary, exclusive, lifelong union of a man and a woman – has been a great blessing. It has provided the bedrock of commitment and trust needed to raise the next generation in a stable and loving environment. Marriage is the foundation of the natural family, which in turn is the basis of all stable societies.

But right now there is a huge push to change the fundamental man-woman meaning of marriage.

The "lifelong" part of marriage's meaning has already been undermined by "easy divorce" laws introduced 40 years ago. Research increasingly shows that children suffer long-term damage from their parents' divorce – even when it is "amicable". When mum and dad split, part of their child splits too.

Randomised, validly controlled studies of same-sex couple families show that children they raise also have serious problems – not related to "homophobia" or bullying. Last year young Melbourne woman Millie Fontana, raised by "two mums", explained why. She said children have a deep inner longing to relate to both their biological parents – to understand their identity and where they came from.



So, with the plebiscite on same-sex "marriage" promised by the federal government after this year's election, why is this vital information not being shouted from the rooftops?

The simple answer is media censorship of a kind we have rarely seen before.

We saw this a year ago when the Australian Marriage Forum paid for a gentle advertisement featuring former PM Julia Gillard. She was shown apologising for earlier forced adoption policies that broke "the most sacred bond there is – the bond between a mother and her baby". The ad then showed two men with a baby who will never know his or her mother.

The ad had been paid for and booked, for showing on SBS television during its broadcast of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in March 2015 – a program that was effectively a free promotion for same-sex "marriage". At the last minute, SBS blocked the ad.

But it gets worse. In August 2015 the Marriage Alliance booked and paid for an advertisement showing the *Titanic* approaching a huge iceberg called "same-sex marriage". A voiceover pointed out: *There's more to it than you think.* Viewers were invited to visit the Marriage Alliance website for more details.

This gentle ad was booked and paid for, to be shown on TV channels 7 and 10. Again, the advertisement was pulled at the last minute. Homosexual activists complained that the ad was "offensive". ACMA dismissed the complaints in September, noting the ad discussed a current political issue. But no TV station is now willing to broadcast it.

Even news reports have been blatantly biased. When the people of Ireland voted 2:1 to support same-sex "marriage" in a May 2015 referendum, every mainstream media outlet in Australia trumpeted the result in endless news items and opinion pieces.

But when the people of Slovenia voted 2:1 to reject same-sex "marriage" in a referendum in December 2015, we could not find a word in any Australian mainstream media. That is why we encourage people to follow our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/familyvoiceaustralia) to get the news that matters!

Then came David Bulmer-Rizzi's sad death in a freak accident while on holiday in Adelaide this year with his partner Marco, after "marrying" in a UK same-sex ceremony last year.

Media reports alleged that since South Australia does not recognise foreign same-sex "marriage", David's death certificate said he had "never married". There was a huge outcry, with calls for Australia to legalise same-sex "marriage" immediately.

But SA Premier Jay Weatherill revealed on ABC national television on 21/1/16 that David Bulmer-Rizzi's death certificate does *not* say he had "never married". Before it was issued, SA authorities had annotated the certificate to refer to the UK marriage. The hospital gave Marco and David's father next-of-kin rights, and Marco was filmed signing a form and receiving his late partner's ashes. The UK government issued a separate death certificate noting the marriage. But the false media claims have not been retracted.

Most Australians, like the *Titanic* passengers last century, are unaware of the looming same-sex "marriage" iceberg. This year we hope to find a way to let them know – before it is too late.

David and Roslyn Phillips

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We seek to honour God's name and advance His kingdom.

We promote God's wise ways for a healthy society where marriage is honoured, human life is respected, families can flourish and fundamental freedoms are enjoyed.

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Senate to investigate porn's harm to kids

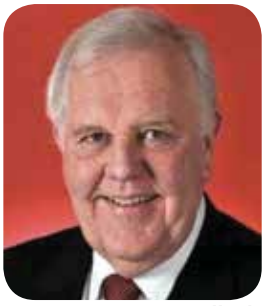
On 17 December last year, Melbourne teen Samuel Aldrich was sentenced to 8½ years in jail for sexually assaulting a girl (16) for two hours, after breaking into her home late at night.

Just before the attack – described by the judge as "absolutely traumatic" for the victim – Samuel (18) had been watching pornography that focused on sleeping females (*The Age*, 17/12/15).

Less than a month after Samuel's sentencing, Sydney's Trinity Grammar School was rocked by reports of a sexual abuse scandal involving six-year-old boys. A Year 1 boy had allegedly recruited at least three friends who joined him in abusing other Year 1 boys in the school toilets and elsewhere (*Daily Telegraph*, 15/1/16).

A mother of a Year 1 boy reported that earlier in 2015, his class had been watching inappropriate material on their iPads during school hours because the security settings had not been set correctly.

FamilyVoice state directors David Sandifer, Peter Stevens and Jim Collins are deeply concerned about the impact of freely available online porn on children, who may decide to copy what they see.



ALP Senator Joe Bullock co-sponsored the motion

"The Trinity Grammar scandal is the tip of the iceberg," Jim Collins told VoxPoint. "Many cases are not reported because parents fear that an investigation may compound the trauma for their child."

Sydney child psychologist Dr Kimberley O'Brien told the *Daily Telegraph* that she and other colleagues are now seeing many children who have viewed pornography that pops up on laptops, phones and iPads. "They are being exposed to a lot of porn," Dr O'Brien said.

"That is why the new Senate committee inquiry on the harmful effects of online pornography on children is such good news," Jim Collins said. "I was in Parliament House in Canberra on 2 December. I quietly cheered when the Senate passed, without dissent, a motion to set up an inquiry into the harm done to Australian children through access to pornography via the internet.



Jim Collins: one third of boys see porn before age 10

"The cross-party motion was co-sponsored by Senators Joe Bullock (ALP, WA), Chris Back (LIB, WA), Joanna Lindgren (LNP, Qld) and John Madigan (IND, Vic). They noted that online pornography is easily accessed through smart phones, tablets and computers and that children are viewing it at an early age. They also noted a link between early exposure to pornography and sexual violence towards women and children.

Jim Collins said one third of boys are being exposed to pornography before the age of ten. "There is mounting evidence that pornography acts like a drug. It can cause addiction, mental health and relationship problems in vulnerable young people," he said.

"The new inquiry – by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications – is an important step towards protecting a generation of children. Submissions close on 10 March 2016."

Why Hollywood won't make a movie about Brad

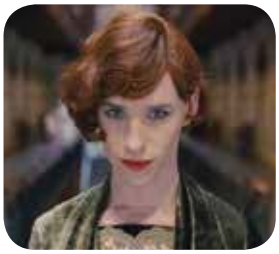
Brad Cooper became Britain's youngest sex-change patient in 2011 after begging his family and the National Health Service to turn him into a girl – but now deeply regrets his decision.[1]

After two suicide attempts and "huge mental anguish", Brad wanted it all reversed. He cancelled the sex-change operation and stopped hormone therapy after failing to find happiness as a female. Now 17, he says the hormone injections left him with extreme emotions and a high sex drive. Living as a woman did not help him find the love he was craving.

Transgenderism is linked with very high suicide rates after reassignment surgery – but Hollywood is not interested in this sad truth. *The Danish Girl*, Hollywood's latest film promoting the LGBTQ lifestyle, paints a more glamorous picture.

The movie is based on a true story of a husband who is quite happy being a man until his wife, an artist, asks him to pose as a woman for her painting. He decides he likes what he sees in the mirror, and later becomes one of the first men to undergo surgery to make him appear female. An infection set in, and he did not survive.

Former transgender Walt Heyer saw *The Danish Girl* in January after its US release. He says it is essentially a sales pitch for transgenderism. It fails to address "the reality of life after sex-reassignment surgery and the need to treat coexisting psychological disorders".[2]



The film 'The Danish Girl' is a sales pitch for transgenderism

Heyer is now passionate about helping others who regret their gender change. He says that in nearly all cases, the disorders of transgender people could be resolved with psychotherapy and medication – not hormones and painful surgery. He says he suffered from a similar psychological condition to the husband (Einar) in *The Danish Girl*.

Like Einar, Walt Heyer had reassignment surgery and was initially elated. But the excitement soon wore off, and his underlying disorder continued unabated.

"When a proper diagnosis of my dissociative disorder was made, the first effective treatment could begin," Heyer said. Eventually his feelings of wanting to be a woman dissolved until they were completely gone. But it was too late.

"My body was irreversibly mutilated," he said.

Brad Cooper is more fortunate – he realised the truth in time to stop the surgery. He hopes he can begin to heal the damaged relationships with his family – but sadly, Hollywood is unlikely to tell his story.

1. 'I was born a boy, became a girl, and now I want to be a boy again', *Daily Mail UK*, 31 October 2012.
2. http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2016/01/16191/

Letters to the editor



Aboriginal culture and homosexuality

As an elder within my own community, I know for a fact that homosexuality and same-sex relationships were not part of our culture, nor were they accepted.

In accordance with Aboriginal law and out of respect for the Land, these relationships were not customary. Our biggest challenge is ensuring Christian values are upheld within families.

Pastor Peter Walker
Mt Druitt, NSW

The true meaning of Christmas

The Queensland *Sunday Mail* editorial (22/12/15) was "politically correct", but missed the point.

Sure, Christmas is about family, friends, Santa, presents, trees, food and sharing good times. However, given 61% of Australians are Christians, why couldn't they also acknowledge that the real purpose and origin of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ?

Even in secular terms, He has had a greater impact on our world and its history than any other. No one who has ever lived has more monuments to His life and teaching than Christ, and the greatest art and music of the Western world has been devoted to celebrating His birth, life and mission.

Christ's teachings have fostered political systems that dignify and provide rights to the individual and have inspired charity, education, and culture. So it is only right to acknowledge that Jesus is the reason for the season.

To whitewash Him out of the picture, as the Victorian Government has in its disgraceful edict banning religious Christmas carols in schools from next year, is to deny our nation's Christian heritage and culture.

Alan Baker
Carina Heights, Qld

Offensive mockery on ABC

I recently watched an episode of the ABC TV program *The Chaser's Media Circus*. The part I watched mocked the royal family. It was offensive and immoral.

The royal family has been and still is loved by millions, and is part of Australia's history. I could see no purpose in the ABC's offensive mockery.

Allan Wilkinson
Mayfield, NSW

Islam threat

What is the greatest threat to the future wellbeing of Australians? Situation ethics, drugs like ice and alcohol, left-wing politics or bikie gangs? No, I suggest that aggressive, rampant Islam is the greatest threat long term.

I have recently distributed copies of Mark Durie's marvellous book, *The Third Choice*, to friends around Australia. This is a scholarly *tour de force* – calmly and compassionately analysing the origins, teachings, history and practices of Islam. I commend it to your readership.

I spent 22 years in the RAAF, sworn to defend Australia against her enemies. But this potential enemy is already within us, and growing at an alarming rate.

Arthur Comer
Sebastopol, Vic

Pornography on TV

Is there anything we can do to stop TV channels showing pornography?

A segment on Channel 9's *A Current Affair* (ACA, 7/12/15) showed obscene and offensive behaviour by Queensland tobacco magnate Travers Beynon, who calls himself the Candyman. ACA broadcast part of a Beynon video showing nearly naked women paraded on all fours on a leash like dogs. Beynon was also shown pretending to murder ACA reporter Leisa Goddard.

ACA is broadcast in prime time when many children are watching. ACA may have been concerned about Beynon's behaviour, but has effectively promoted it by showing the video. I have complained to Channel 9 – I hope many other people will do so too.

Shirley Tree
Springwood, Qld

Editor's note: *FamilyVoice and others strongly opposed the new TV Code of Practice before it came into effect on 1 December 2015. Our concerns were ignored by Free TV Australia, the Australian Communications and Media Authority and the former Minister for Communications (now PM) Malcolm Turnbull.*

We have written to new communications minister Mitch Fifield, pointing out that the new Code allows M-rated programs, including scenes like those shown by ACA, to be screened as early as 7.30 pm. Where is the protection for Australian children?

Open debate under threat

It is deeply disturbing that a Catholic archbishop is being dragged to an anti-discrimination authority for simply expressing a traditional view on the subject that until quite recently was shared by both the major political parties as well as a large segment of the population. This exposes religious organisations to attack from outsiders and leaves their practices and beliefs unguarded.

If religious organisations can be punished for expressing their traditional views on marriage, family and a child's right to a father and mother, then I wonder what else they and their followers might be punished for if same-sex marriage is legalised in Australia.

Before a plebiscite on same-sex marriage can even take place in this country, it is necessary to address the intolerable impact that anti-discrimination laws are having on free speech.

A real democracy – and we must never forget this – requires that controversial issues will be resolved by the people only after a truly open and robust debate has taken place.

Augusto Zimmermann
Law Reform Commissioner, WA

End this family payment rort

If a family decides they want to put their children into childcare so both parents can work for pay, the government is happy to subsidise this and give them extra money towards it. Yet if a family decides they want to care for their own children and sacrifices one income to do so, the government slugs them further to pay for the assistance given to double-income families.

So single-income families get a smaller income than double-income families, they pay tax at a higher rate (they pay one tax-free threshold instead of two), and the financial assistance provided by the government to two-income families is refused them.

Is this for economic reasons, ideological reasons or both? Whatever the reasoning, if Malcolm Turnbull is genuine in wanting to make the tax system fairer, he will move to end this rort against single-income parents.

Brian Schroeder
Warradale, SA

The school bullying problem



by Roslyn Phillips, BSc DipEd

National Research Officer, FamilyVoice Australia

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FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

"Throughout school I was always a geeky kid," Stuart McGregor (41) says. "A nerd if you will. The kind of kid bullies love. Except I had one feature that stood out. I was a coppertop. A red dog. A ranga. A redhead. With freckles.

"That feature made me a target for bullies. On a daily basis I would be beaten. I was afraid to go to the toilet at school for fear of my head being flushed. "Let's get that red out of your hair, ranga," the bullies would say as they tipped me upside down. Blue Loo tastes as awful as it looks and smells.

"Then there was the trip home. I had to get off the school bus early a few times after my belongings were thrown out the window.

"I started to have physical illnesses in reaction to all of this. Nasty things like irritable bowel syndrome, chest pains (at 13 years of age), all stress related.

"I have recently been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I still have flashbacks. It makes it hard to hold a job down or a relationship together. All because of the anxiety caused by bullying." [1]

School bullying – children being mean to other children – has probably been going on ever since schools were invented. Many children around the world experience it at some stage during their school years.

However, bullying rates in Australian schools appear to be higher than many other countries. A survey of schools in 40 countries found bullying rates ranging from about 5 to 30 percent.[2] *Australia was not part of the study, but our bullying rates – of about one child in four – are concerning.*[3,4]

The Australian rate peaks during the final years of primary school where nearly a third of students are targeted.[5] *Some suffer serious harm to their mental health. School bullying is a serious problem.*

What is bullying?

The Kids Helpline says school-related bullying has three main components:

- A deliberate intent to harm,
- A power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim,
- (Often) repeated behaviour.[6]

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical bullying: hitting, poking and pushing – usually the least common form of bullying, declining with age,
- Verbal bullying: name calling, insults, racist remarks and so on. Name calling is the most common form of bullying,
- Covert bullying: any form of aggressive behaviour that is repeated, intended to cause harm, and hidden out of sight or unacknowledged by adults. As students get older, they tend to engage in more covert bullying over overt bullying behaviour,
- Social/relational bullying: lying about someone, spreading rumours, excluding someone, mimicking and so on,
- Psychological bullying: threatening, manipulating, and stalking someone,
- Cyber bullying: using emails, mobile phones and social networking sites to verbally, covertly, psychologically bully.[7]

What are the main reasons children are bullied?

A Canadian survey of 105,000 students has found that by far the most common reason for being bullied is a child's appearance or body image.[8] School bullies are most likely to target those who are fat, thin, tall, short, red-haired, very beautiful, ugly, unfashionably dressed – or who look different from the norm in any other way.

The second most common reason for being bullied is the victim's intelligence. Students who achieve very high school grades, along with those at the bottom of the class, often experience bullying.

Next most common is having a minority racial or cultural background. Further down the list is family income – if it is significantly higher or lower than average.

Many recent Australian articles on bullying list sexual orientation and gender identity among the common reasons why children are bullied. In reality, these are not even in the top seven reasons.

Sydney *Daily Telegraph* columnist Miranda Devine says there is no evidence that homosexual/transgender bullying is a big problem in NSW schools.

She quotes school principals cited by a Family Planning NSW report on a consultation about *Proud Schools*, a pilot program addressing the problem of "homophobic" bullying:

> "There's not a great deal of overt homophobia," says one.
>
> "Not many cases of overt discrimination but there is name calling," says another.
>
> "I haven't had any issues of homophobic violence at this school," says another.
>
> One principal said: "We have some openly gay male students. Some are embraced but some are bullied. If they're popular they're OK but if they're not they get bullied."
>
> Another said: "We have one obvious transsexual student who doesn't associate well with other students. Not because of his gender but because of other family issues. He does struggle with his identity. He gets sympathy from staff but gets ignored by students."
>
> A teacher is quoted in the Proud Schools report saying: "The problem is language rather than overt discrimination. Gay is still used as a derogatory term. What I see is language that is inappropriate, 'That's so gay', etc."
>
> … Over the past seven years *The Daily Telegraph's* education reporter Bruce McDougall has been monitoring NSW Education Department safety and security incident reports of violence and other problems at schools. He has not seen one report relating to homophobia.
>
> Yes, bullying and violence occurs at schools and every effort should be made to prevent it. But it does not primarily relate to sexuality, and false claims that it does could promote a backlash or even send the message that bullying for other reasons is not as bad.[9]

How may bullying affect its victims?

The impacts of bullying on the bullied child are varied and may include:

- Loss of motivation and concentration at school,
- Avoidance concerning attending school or school refusal,
- Shyness, social isolation and/or the development of a social phobia,
- Poor self-esteem and loss of self-confidence,
- Physical health issues, anxiety or panic attacks, depression, suicidality and self-harm.[10]

Bullying and suicide

In a few cases, bullying can lead to suicide. One website records 15 cases of girls aged between 10 and 16 who took their own lives after being bullied.[11] The bullies were mostly other girls, who repeatedly taunted, mocked and/or excluded their victims out of jealousy or spite. One victim was very tall; one suffered from eczema; one had a facial scar; one was highly intelligent; one was very beautiful.

None of these cases involved sexual orientation or transgenderism, although a number of studies have found very high rates of suicide ideation among same-sex attracted teens. In the latter group, bullying may not have been the main factor in their distress. A 2014 study led by Dr Delaney Skerrett of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention found that a leading cause of LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) suicides was "stress from their romantic partners" rather than "homophobia". The study found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often, with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT (suicide) cases".[12]

Obese children are especially likely to experience bullying. JoAnn Stevelos, in a 2010 article published by the Obesity Action Coalition, notes:

> In a recent national survey of overweight sixth graders, 24 percent of the boys and 30 percent of the girls experienced daily teasing, bullying or rejection because of their size. The number doubles for overweight high school students with 58 percent of boys and 63 percent of girls experiencing daily teasing, bullying or rejection because of their size…
>
> A 2004 study of bullying behaviors in 5,749 boys and girls (11-16 years old) showed that overweight and obese school-aged children were more likely to be the victims and perpetrators of bullying behaviors than their normal-weight peers…
>
> Children and teens who are victims of bullying may have thoughts of suicide and some actually commit suicide.[13]

Bullying now the biggest concern of Australian children

A 2014 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found children were more worried about bullying than any other problem.[14]

Child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg and others attribute the increased concern to modern technology, where digital networking allows greater opportunities for bullies to harm more people. He urges parents to limit the amount of screen time they allow their children.[15]

Long daycare link to aggression

However there may be another factor contributing to the bullying increase. A 2014 study by University of Adelaide researchers monitored the development of more than 3200 children across Australia following time spent in different types of care up to age three.[16]

The researchers found that the length of time spent in childcare centres was directly linked to increases in problem behaviours by the age of four or five. Such children were more likely to be restless, easily distracted and aggressive towards others.



Toddlers who spend long hours in daycare are more demanding, non-compliant and aggressive

This 2014 finding is in line with previous large longitudinal studies – such as the 2001 research by Dr Jay Belsky, who followed 1,100 children in ten US cities in a variety of settings. He found that children who spent more than 30 hours a week in childcare are "more demanding, more non-compliant, and they are more aggressive. They scored higher on things like gets in *lots of fights, cruelty, bullying, meanness,* as well as *taking too much, demands must be met immediately.*"[17]

The number of children under five in Australian long daycare centres has risen markedly in recent years. For example, there were 441,240 in the September quarter of 2004 – rising to 615,630 in the September quarter of 2012: an increase of about 40 per cent in eight years.[18]

School violence follows expansion of long daycare places

In 2013 UK psychologist Oliver James noted that increases in UK classroom violence have followed the expansion of nursery (daycare) places in Britain.[19] "We start off as barbarians and what makes us civilised is being loved and looked after," he said. "If you are an 18 month old in a nursery, it is impossible for you not to feel threatened. You are surrounded by savages and you are a little savage too."

Mr James pointed to a 2010 US childcare study that tracked youngsters for 15 years, showing a correlation between the hours in nursery daycare and increased aggression and bad behaviour.[20]

He noted a rise in school violence, with 40 primary school students expelled from English schools every day for assaulting their teachers. The increase was greatest in England's wealthy south east.

"No one can deny that daycare increases aggressiveness in toddlers," Mr James said. "A toddler raised at home with a single carer is six times less likely to be aggressive than one enduring more than 45 hours a week in daycare. The more daycare the child has, the greater the aggressiveness."

Australian government family policies in recent years have also encouraged mothers of very young children to return to the paid workforce. Taxpayer-subsidised daycare is available, along with just six months of taxpayer-funded maternity leave. At the same time, subsidies and rebates have been cut for families on a single income who have chosen parent care for their babies and toddlers.

These policies may have contributed to the increase in the number of Australian babies and toddlers in daycare – with the possibility of aggression and bullying in Australian schools later on.

Australian government action

In 2010, education ministers in all Australian states and territories endorsed the National Safe Schools Framework.[21] The Framework aims to create an environment "where all members of the school community both feel safe and are safe from harassment, aggression, violence and bullying. It responds to new and emerging challenges … such as cybersafety, cyberbullying and community concerns about young people and weapons".[22]

The Safe Schools Hub

Part of the Safe Schools Framework has been the establishment of the Safe Schools Hub website (www.safeschoolshub.edu.au). It is a "one-stop shop" for information and resources on strategies to help teachers, students, parents and others combat bullying of all kinds.[23]

The Safe Schools Hub should not be confused with the so-called "Safe Schools Coalition". This "Coalition" was not part of the 2010 National Safe Schools Framework, but was developed independently that year by Victorian Gay and Lesbian Health for Victorian schools. It is funded by the Victorian government.

The "Safe Schools Coalition" name is deliberately deceptive. The program does not aim to make schools safe for everyone – only for the small minority of students who are same-sex attracted, transgender or intersex. Its main message is that same-sex attraction and transgenderism are common, normal and should be celebrated.

The Safe Schools Coalition Australia

The Safe Schools Coalition was adopted nationally as the voluntary Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) program in the final weeks of the Rudd government in June 2013. Taxpayer funding ($8 million over four years) via the Foundation for Young Australians was secured by openly lesbian Senator Penny Wong, who was then finance minister. By 9 January 2016, the SSCA was operating in 493 schools with 329,874 students across all states and territories, and had trained 13,516 teachers.[24]

Melbourne Rabbi Shimon Cowen has written a damning indictment of the Safe Schools Coalition program.[25] He said the bullying of students with same-sex attractions must be stopped – but the SSCA is not needed to achieve this goal. The program has the potential to harm "values, freedoms, children and society".

Rabbi Cowen also noted that:

- The program seeks to counter the ethical stance of the world religions – which respect all persons, but oppose homosexual conduct. The SSCA teaches students that homosexual practice is "equally normative with heterosexual practice".
- The SSCA counters the religious freedom of parents to raise their children in their own basic beliefs (or at least not to have these negated in school).
- The SSCA is seriously flawed as an anti-bullying program. To stop the bullying of obese children, we do not need to "celebrate" obesity in schools. There is no warrant to "celebrate" homosexual behaviour in order to stop bullying of children with homosexual inclinations.
- The SSCA causes harm by encouraging children to "identify" and "affirm" their sexual preferences at a young age. Up to 26% of children experience fluidity and uncertainty in personal and sexual identity at age 12, but are normally settled as heterosexual by adulthood, where only 2-3% identify as homosexual or bisexual.



Open letter to the Prime Minister

By March 2015, more than 14,000 Australians signed a FamilyVoice Australia open letter to the Prime Minister on the Safe Schools Coalition Australia. The letter asked for the program's funding to be cancelled, with the money used to support programs that address bullying more generally.[26]

Among other things, the fully referenced letter pointed out that:

- The SSCA program focuses only on the small minority of "same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people".
- SSCA provides free resources, but only to help staff respond to "homophobia and transphobia", and to support and celebrate "gender and sexual diversity".
- The term *homophobia* literally means "an extreme, irrational fear of homosexuality" but it is used to abuse and intimidate anyone who believes, with good evidence, that homosexual conduct carries serious health and other risks. For good reasons, the style book of Associated Press has told journalists to stop using the term.
- The term *transphobia* is equally misused. A boy who feels like a girl is suffering from gender dysphoria (or confusion). It is a complex condition, and schools need great care in dealing with the tiny percentage of students who identify in this way.
- Transgenderism is analogous to anorexia, where a dangerously thin child feels fat. Such children need compassion, but not reinforcement of their confusion. Hormone treatment and surgery can change a person's appearance but cannot change their biological sex.
- In reality, the program is thinly disguised propaganda to normalise homosexual behaviour and cross dressing among students at an age when some may be confused about their identity. It inappropriately sexualises the classroom. By encouraging students to "come out" as gay, lesbian or transgender, the program exposes students to serious physical and psychological health risks.
- Encouraging confused boys to use girls' toilets and change rooms (and vice versa) is inappropriate and could lead to problems with sexual harassment.

'Anti-bullying' program causes bullying

Anecdotal reports from some students with same-sex attractions/transgender feelings indicate that they feel safer and more empowered as a result of SSCA programs in their schools.

But the SSCA has had the reverse effect for some other students. They now feel unsafe, after being taunted and humiliated because they do not support the program's political agenda – which includes the promotion of same-sex marriage and same-sex couple parenting.

Some parents of students at a Sydney high school were outraged in 2015 when the school – along with several other schools that had joined the SSCA – arranged for

The mother of a student at a Safe Schools Coalition Australia school wrote about her concerns in 2015:

The Safe Schools Coalition Australia program has been a cause of stress, anxiety and tears for my child – who strongly agrees with the anti-bullying message, but does not support all values endorsed by and associated with the LGBTIQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer) movement.

Students who take issue with some aspects of the program are themselves feeling bullied and are being told they are ignorant and homophobic. My child is aware of many students from a variety of cultural and faith backgrounds who feel the same way, but are not able to respectfully raise their concerns and beliefs for fear of being negatively labelled. Students of faith should also be made to feel safe in a school environment. Freedom of belief should be respected.

Several parents I know who have politely and respectfully questioned some aspects of the program at my child's school have been openly criticised in parent meetings. At no time have these parents questioned the anti-bullying and non-discrimination message. They have only questioned the way in which students have been asked to show their support for LGBTIQ issues.

Students should be taught that bullying and discrimination are wrong, for all groups – LGBTIQ students, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, refugees, religious groups, those with learning difficulties, students with physical disabilities, autistic students, children who are overweight, those who struggle with depression and for many other reasons. Many of these groups are just as marginalised as the LGBTIQ communities and yet they are not focused on (or celebrated) at all.

My child's school held a non-uniform day where the rainbow flag was flown from the school flagpole and students were asked to wear rainbow colours to celebrate and support LGBTIQ students. Some parents objected because minors aged 11-18 were being asked to celebrate sexuality despite community concerns about the early sexualisation of children.

The rainbow has become symbolic of the gay rights and gay pride movements, and many of its associated causes including same-sex marriage. This has nothing to do with anti-bullying and everything to do with promoting a political cause.

Material freely available to children and young teens through the Safe Schools Coalition website encourages them to be sexually adventurous and to experiment if they are unsure of their sexuality. Schools should not be encouraging minors to explore sex and sexuality or to label themselves before they are fully mature.

How do schools reconcile their duty of care and child protection responsibilities with celebrating the sexuality of minors?[27]

all students to watch a film promoting gay parenting during two lessons.[28] Although the NSW education minister later banned the film from being shown during school hours, parental concerns about the SSCA's political agenda remain (see box on previous page).

Anti-bullying programs

Numerous programs – from Australia and overseas – have been designed to reduce bullying in schools. Some examples are listed below:

Friendly Schools Plus is a whole-of-school program developed and tested over 13 years by Professor Donna Cross and others from the Macquarie University Centre for Emotional Health in Sydney. It aims to build students' social skills and enhance their relationships while also reducing bullying and its associated consequences.[29] A complementary program is called *Cool Kids* – designed to help children who suffer from an anxiety disorder (and hence are more vulnerable to bullying).[30]

Bullyed is an anti-bullying program designed by the Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors, a peak national association of counsellors and psychotherapists, for primary and secondary school students. It aims to foster students' self-esteem, resilience and mindfulness, along with respect for the rights of others, through small group interactions.[31]

Better buddies has the limited aim of helping young students entering primary school feel safe by linking them with buddies from senior classes.[32] *Bully busters* provides assertiveness training for primary school students, helping them to stand up to bullies.[33] The *No bully* program claims to have remedied over 90% cases of bullying via its intervention program "helping kids to help other kids".[34]

The WA program *Choose Respect* aims to change student attitudes in a positive way rather than focusing on the negatives of bullying.[35]

The US *RULER* program from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence aims to change students' behaviour and attitudes by helping them understand and control their emotions – leading to greater empathy for others.[36]

The *CASSE Peaceful Schools* program has a similar in approach to *RULER*. It is based on psychoanalytical principles to promote empathy via sharing and listening.[37]

Do school anti-bullying programs work?

An October 2013 *TIME* article by a US researcher reported that anti-bullying programs were ineffective, counter-productive, or produced only modest reductions in bullying.[38]

However an August 2013 *Positive Times* article by Australian researcher Ken Rigby was more optimistic.[39] He pointed out that most teachers are unaware of or confused about the most effective anti-bullying approaches. He outlined six methods that have been found to reduce bullying, but said no single method works in all cases. Much better teacher training is needed.

Conclusion

Governments should provide funding for teacher training to implement anti-bullying programs that have been shown in valid controlled studies to significantly reduce bullying of all groups of victims.

Taxpayer funding should be discontinued for programs with an underlying socio-political agenda, or programs that reduce some forms of bullying while increasing others.

Government family policies should provide equal support for families who wish to provide parental care rather than daycare for their very young children.

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Vic: Ban on Christian carols and the Bible

FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens has asked Premier Andrews to withdraw controversial new guidelines banning Christian praise songs and the Bible in public school class time.

Mr Stevens said every Victorian child has the right to know about our Christian heritage and its contribution to our Western democracy.

"People have been gathering in Melbourne to sing carols on Christmas Eve since 1938," he said, pointing out that most songs at Melbourne's Carols By Candlelight tell about Christ's birth.

"What sort of Grinch-mentality education department would try to remove the very core of one of the most joyful celebrations in our Australian calendar?" he asked.

Mr Stevens said the new guidelines are confusing and discriminatory. "I look forward to hearing that they have been withdrawn – for our children's and grandchildren's sake," he said.

National: Senate committee backs FamilyVoice recommendations

Halal certification recommendations by a Senate committee report on third party food certification are in line with those in the FamilyVoice (FAVA) submission.

Committee chairman Senator Sam Dastyari, son of Iranian Muslims, was originally sceptical of the inquiry. He changed his mind after hearing the evidence – saying some halal certifiers were "nothing more than scammers" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2/12/15).

The FamilyVoice submission stated the Australian government should require all certified food products, including halal-certified foods, to be clearly labelled on their packaging. It also called for certification processes, including halal certification, to be consistent and transparent, with full public accountability for fees received.

The Dastyari committee report included similar recommendations, calling for government oversight of halal certification and clearer labelling of halal products.

SA/NT: Warning against harmful abortion drug

FamilyVoice SA/NT director David d'Lima has asked Northern Territory MPs to consider the evidence before voting on a bill allowing use of the abortion drug RU486.

He sent the 25 MPs an article from *The Age* noting many of the drug's harmful effects. Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved RU486, despite evidence that it has led to the deaths of some 20 women overseas. One Australian woman died from septicaemia after taking RU486 in 2010.

Hundreds of women have reported severe side-effects, including prolonged pain, blood loss and infection. Yet former federal health minister Tanya Plibersek has said the drug would be an advantage for women in remote areas.

Mr d'Lima said the evidence shows the reverse is true. "Lack of nearby medical care means women in remote areas are at greater risk when RU486 complications arise," he said.

NSW: Sex work myths debunked

FamilyVoice NSW director Dr David Sandifer has debunked the misinformation by Scarlet Alliance - a lobby group for the sex industry.

He has warned NSW state MPs not to be taken in by an article on *news.com.au* (3/1/16), which claims decriminalised sex trade laws protect women from sexual blackmail.

"In reality, NSW prostitution is out of control," Dr Sandifer said. "Hundreds of women are victims of trafficking and violence.

"One of the reasons for the recent NSW prostitution inquiry has been the growing lawlessness of pimps and madams under decriminalisation," he said. "Unfortunately, the inquiry report's recommendations will not solve those problems."

Dr Sandifer has called for the adoption of prostitution laws similar to those in Nordic countries, which ban the buying of sex and help women quit their harmful trade.

WA: Kalgoorlie hears former homosexual's story

James Parker's testimony of 'coming out twice' at the FamilyVoice WA dinner last year inspired calls for his message to be heard more widely.

WA director David Lowe arranged for James to speak at two events in Kalgoorlie, where they were warmly received at a public forum on 27 November, and a "Breakfast for Blokes" the next morning.

"People were keen to hear a side to the homosexuality story that the mainstream media don't want us to know," Mr Lowe said. "I had brought along some FamilyVoice publications, including our *VoxBrief* on 'Are homosexuals born that way?' It was so popular that we ran out!"

Qld: Free speech under attack

New FamilyVoice Queensland director Andrew Lawton has called for religious freedom to be upheld after a Gold Coast street preacher was arrested for speaking about sin.

George Youssef, a member of Operation 513, was arrested in Cavill Mall on 4 December. The group had been authorised to assemble and preach peacefully under Queensland's Peaceful Assembly Act. He pleaded *Not Guilty* on 5 January, and will face court again this month.

George was charged with failing to "move on" after a police sergeant told him to do so because he had mentioned some sins listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – such as adultery, slander, theft, greed, swindling and homosexual conduct. He also said Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6).

The officer said (in part): "You have talked about homosexuality, offending members of the public about homosexuality."

Andrew Lawton has called for the charge to be swiftly dismissed. "What has happened to religious freedom in Queensland? Since when has it been an offence to discuss the Bible?" he asked.



Queensland director Andrew Lawton

Tas: Call for anti-discrimination law reform

FamilyVoice Tasmania director Jim Collins is continuing to urge Premier Will Hodgman to reform the controversial section 17(1) of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

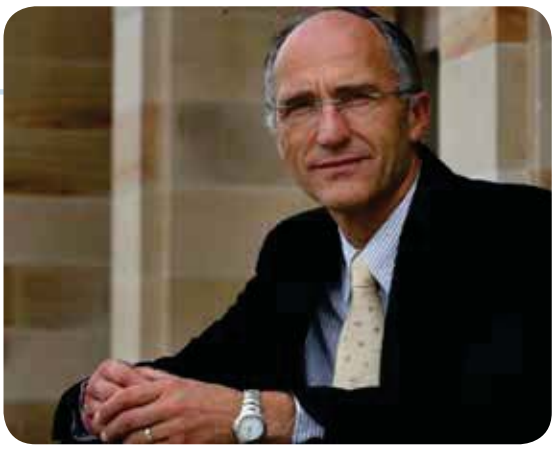
This section says a person must not engage in any conduct which "offends" or "insults" another person based on 21 different attributes – including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Transgender Greens activist Martine Delaney used this law to lodge a complaint against Archbishop Julian Porteous about a Catholic booklet on marriage.

Jim Collins said people should have the right to express reasonable views on important topics like marriage without fear of legal action. "Free speech is something all Australians should enjoy," he said. "This law undermines it."

Why 'All Of Us' will not help all of us

A new taxpayer-funded educational resource – called 'All Of Us' – is now available for Australian teachers and students. In a recent analysis (edited below), WA state MP Peter Abetz explains why it could do more harm than good.



Peter Abetz MP is concerned about the resource

All Of Us was produced by the Safe Schools Coalition Australia and Minus18. It is aimed at Year 7 and Year 8 students (age span 11-14) and can be downloaded from the www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au site.

The program teaches students about gender diversity, sexual diversity and intersex topics through videos of the personal stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people. Schools are encouraged to use these videos in almost every subject: Health and Physical Education, English, History, Humanities, Legal Studies, Civics and Citizenship.

All Of Us aims to "recognise and celebrate" each person's "unique sexuality, gender identity or intersex status". It claims that 10% of people are same-sex attracted; 4% are transgender or gender diverse; 1.7% of people are intersex; 75% of LGBTI students experience abuse or discrimination.

Invalid statistics

These statistics are over-stated, or need to be seen in context. Most obese teens are regularly abused and bullied because of their size, for example. Where is their program?

The claim that 10% of Australian high school students are LGBTI comes from the unreliable 2013 *5th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health.* Most participants were volunteers, and some were recruited via gay websites. There was no way of verifying the ages of those who responded to the online version of the survey, or discounting any who responded multiple times in order to skew the results.

By contrast, a 2013 phone survey of a very large random sample found that only about 3.5 per cent of Australians aged 16-59 identify as homosexual, bisexual or not always heterosexual.[1]

There is no scientific basis for the assertion that 10% of students are same-sex attracted.



Does 'All Of Us' really promote respect for all?

The program aims to increase respect for LGBTI people. It makes no attempt to teach respect for those who, for cultural or religious reasons, consider LGBTI sexual activity harmful or unacceptable, or who consider heterosexuality to be the norm for society.

Some of the lesson plan problems

Lesson 1 talks a lot about respecting others, stating that "we respect other people's opinions even if they are different to our own". However it gives no guidance on how to respect those who, for cultural or religious reasons, consider LGBTI sexual activity unacceptable.

> **'There is no scientific basis for the assertion that 10% of students are same-sex attracted.'**

Lesson 2 defines sexual diversity and attacks homophobia. It says sexual identity is "who you love, like and hookup with". *Hookup* is slang for having sex – yet this lesson is designed for Year 7 and 8 students, who are too young to legally engage in sexual activity. Most parents would not want their children to be taught that "hooking up" is normal at their age.

Lesson 3 says that young people often realise that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual between the ages of 11 and 14, and that the average age for "coming out" is 16 years old. There is no mention of the large international surveys that show most same-sex attracted teens later identify as heterosexual.[2] This lesson is likely to increase the confusion of students who are struggling to find their identity.

Lesson 4 teaches that "sex" is about the body you are born with (male, female or intersex), while "gender" refers to "the way you feel on the inside". This lesson seeks to normalise gender dysphoria. We do not help anorexic students by normalising their self-perception of being fat: therapy aims to help them see reality. The lesson does not mention the fact that 70-80% of young people who experience gender dysphoria outgrow this as they mature.[3]

Lesson 5 teaches that "there (is) a whole range of human bodies that are sometimes between what you might expect a boy or a girl to look like… This is completely normal and natural..." Definitions of the "intersex" condition vary, but those with such chromosomal or hormonal abnormalities generally identify with the sex they are assigned. Children should be taught to be respectful of people who have this extremely rare condition. It is confusing to describe it as "normal".

Lesson 8 encourages students to evaluate the school environment and advocate for change – to the curriculum, toilets (to gender-neutral), pro-LGBTI library books, LGBTI posters and promotions throughout the school.

Australia's cultural diversity should be celebrated – but *All Of Us* and other Safe Schools Coalition materials are intolerant of our cultural and religious diversity. The resource should not be imposed on students in our schools. ■

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WA Christians face possible death

Many people are praying for WA Christians Dr Ken and Mrs Jocelyn Elliot, who were abducted in January by Al-Qaeda jihadists from a town in West Africa. There are grave fears for their safety.



Ken and Jocelyn Elliot

Perth doctor Lachlan Dunjey told *VoxPoint* that he knew Dr Elliot (now 81) from their time in medical school in the early 1960s. Ken is a surgeon, and Jocelyn is a teacher who later trained as a pathologist. During the last 48 years they have saved countless lives.

They first worked in Dahomey and Upper Volta, but since 1972 have lived in the remote Burkina Faso town of Djibo – the only health workers in an area of two million people. Ken built the 120-bed Djibo hospital largely with his own hands. He has performed up to 150 operations each month.

Ken and Jocelyn receive no salary. They have never asked for the donations of money, drugs and equipment which arrive – sometimes miraculously – to keep their vital work going. Australian friends, Peace Corp volunteers, Oxfam, Dutch and Swiss Christian groups are among those who have helped. The Djibo hospital is not affiliated with any church or other long-term sponsors. The Elliots have had only four trips back to Australia during the last 48 years.

Ken joined the Evangelical Union during his university years. *The Weekend Australian* (23/1/16) reported that he "felt a strong calling to use his medical degree to help the most needy".

Many are praying for another miracle – that their Muslim captors may see the love of Christ that inspires and sustains Ken and Jocelyn, and may release them unharmed.

The Queen's Bible message

Millions of people around the globe watched Queen Elizabeth II witness to her personal Christian faith during her 2015 Christmas Day TV broadcast. Unlike her other speeches, the Queen's annual Christmas TV message is entirely her own (BBC News, 25/12/05). She told viewers (in part):

It is true that the world has had to confront moments of darkness this year, but the Gospel of John contains a verse of great hope, often read at Christmas carol services: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

One cause for thankfulness this summer was marking 70 years since the end of the Second World War. On VJ Day, we honoured the remaining veterans of that terrible conflict in the Far East, as well as remembering the thousands who never returned.



The Queen speaks about the meaning of Christmas

At the end of that war, the people of Oslo began sending an annual gift of a Christmas tree for Trafalgar Square. It has 500 light bulbs and is enjoyed not just by Christians but by people of all faiths, and of none. At the very top sits a bright star, to represent the Star of Bethlehem.

The custom of topping a tree also goes back to (my great-great grandfather) Prince Albert's time. For his family's tree, he chose an angel, helping to remind us that the focus of the Christmas story is on one particular family.

For Joseph and Mary, the circumstances of Jesus's birth – in a stable – were far from ideal, but worse was to come as the family was forced to flee the country. It's no surprise that such a human story still captures our imagination and continues to inspire all of us who are Christians, the world over.

Despite being displaced and persecuted throughout his short life, Christ's unchanging message was not one of revenge or violence but simply that we should love one another.

Although it is not an easy message to follow, we shouldn't be discouraged; rather, it inspires us to try harder: to be thankful for the people who bring love and happiness into our own lives, and to look for ways of spreading that love to others, whenever and wherever we can.

The customary decorations have changed little in the years since that picture of Victoria and Albert's tree first appeared, although of course electric lights have replaced the candles. There's an old saying that "it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness".

There are millions of people lighting candles of hope in our world today. Christmas is a good time to be thankful for them, and for all that brings light to our lives.

Pastor found 'not guilty' of vilification

A Northern Ireland judge has acquitted Belfast pastor James McConnell, who had been on trial for criticising Islamic beliefs.

Pastor McConnell had said in a 2014 sermon – recorded in church and streamed online – that Islam is "satanic". He has said he loves Muslim people, but opposes their theology.

Judge Liam McNally said in his ruling on 5/1/16 that he found Pastor McConnell's words offensive – but not "grossly offensive". He said courts should be cautious in clamping down on free speech – even if some found it "contemptible".

FamilyVoice Australia national director Dr David Phillips said he hoped the Northern Ireland ruling would be noted by Australian MPs who have supported laws that undermine free speech.

"It is one thing to pass laws against threats or incitement to violence," he said. "But laws prohibiting the expression of opinions that others disagree with have no place in our Australian democracy."



Pastor James McConnell

Our Stories

Why we do what we do at FamilyVoice



"The love of Jesus is at the centre of our family, which is a source of love and support."

ANDREW LAWTON

FamilyVoice Queensland Director

What is your background?

I grew up in a Methodist (now Uniting) Church. At 21 I joined the Wesleyan Methodists, but after our marriage Karmel and I became Baptists – and still are.

I worked in the Australian Taxation Office for over ten years before taking up study at Bible College and going into pastoral ministry. Since then, I have pastored several Baptist churches in Queensland as well as building a house, training as a teacher and teaching in primary and high schools.

What led you into ministry?

I began theological studies with the view to eventually teaching in a Bible college. But the Lord challenged me with the need for sound Biblical preachers and pastors among His people. I was struck by the prophecy: "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD, "when I will send a famine through the land – not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD." (Amos 8:1)

What do you treasure about family?

Karmel and I have four daughters: Tegan, Paige, Phoebe and Annie-Rose – two at university and two nearing the end of school. The love of Jesus is at the centre of our family, which is a source of love and support. We appreciate each other's differences and draw strength from our relationships.

Although we make mistakes and are accountable for them, we do so in an environment of grace and forgiveness. We are blessed in that all our family members are committed Christians and part of a local church.

Did you know?

Andrew loves history and has spent a lot of time in family history research. He says it is sobering to discover the hardships our ancestors endured compared with our lives of ease and plenty.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in South Africa. In 2007, my family and I emigrated to Australia, looking for a more secure future. Prior to my role at FamilyVoice, I worked as a management consultant for 12 years. I have also been studying part-time at the Bible College of South Australia – working towards a double degree in theology and ministry. It is inspiring being surrounded by people who are so passionate about the gospel.

Why do you think the work of FamilyVoice is important?

As Christians, we are called to be salt and light in the world. FamilyVoice brings a Christian worldview to the issues facing our nation, and equips Christians to proactively engage with our society. The parliamentary submissions that FamilyVoice produce often bring about positive changes to state and federal legislation.

What does family mean to you?

My family is God's blessing for me. Together, we often find humour and laughter in difficult situations and share a joy in Christ.



MICHAEL BOWKER

National Office Manager

Did you know?

Michael enjoys cricket, rugby union, reading and watching movies. He is also actively involved in the children's ministry at his church, and preaches occasionally.