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VoxPoint

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AP Images

Election winner

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce holds the Bible in his right hand on 19 July, as he promises to well and truly serve the people of Australia (full story, p 3).

Also inside:

- *Census bias*
- *Physical discipline: is it ever OK?*
- *'Safe Schools': a parent speaks out*

Editorial

Census bias



Is the Census – not to mention SBS – politically biased? You be the judge!

An SBS TV journalist phoned FamilyVoice recently, wanting to interview us about the 2016 Census question on gender.

In previous years, the Census has asked Australians whether they were male or female. But in 2016, we have been given *three* choices: male, female or "other".

"What do you think of this change?" the SBS journalist asked us. We replied promptly, with full references – saying (in part):

The three gender options in the Census – "male", "female" or "other" – officially endorse the unproven view that humans can have a sex different from that of the chromosomes in every cell of their body.

When a boy, with male genitals and other sex characteristics, says he feels he is a girl, he is said to suffer from gender dysphoria.

Gender dysphoria is not a condition he was born with. Research shows that identical twins may include one twin with gender dysphoria and the other without, even though each twin has the exactly the same genes and hormone exposure in the womb. Life experiences – including bullying by peers or older siblings, or mental illness in a parent, may contribute to this condition.

Studies show that the vast majority of children with these feelings lose them before reaching adulthood. Encouraging irreversible interventions in childhood could be harmful.



Columnist Miranda Devine

Gender dysphoria is similar to body integrity identity disorder, where a person feels uncomfortable with one of his or her healthy limbs, and seeks to have it amputated. Like gender identity disorder, body integrity identity disorder is a condition of the mind. It should be treated with compassion, but like other identity confusion issues, should not be affirmed.

Gender dysphoria should not be given official endorsement in a Census question.

But this compassionate, evidence-based answer was not what the SBS was looking for. A few days later the journalist got back to us, saying they no longer wanted an interview. They had decided to take a "slightly different angle", she said, but declined to tell us what that angle was.

Perhaps we did not fit the "bigot" image SBS was hoping to portray.

Not long after this knock-back, *The Australian* (20/7/16) and other media revealed the irony that girls at Cheltenham Girls High School in northwest Sydney were no longer allowed to be called "girls".

At a staff meeting called to discuss the implementation of the controversial "Safe Schools" program, teachers were told they could be breaking the law if they did not support decisions of LGBTI (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex) students. Terms such as "girls", "ladies" and "women" were to be replaced by gender-neutral language.

Daily Telegraph columnist Miranda Devine commented (19/7/16, in part): "This is presented as a way to make a small minority of LGBTI students feel comfortable, but its insidious effect is to impose a transformation of the traditional view of male and female.

"We are told that it is bigotry to have a 'hetero-normative' view of gender as binary — male or female — or to believe that heterosexual attraction is the norm. But children who don't go along with the illogical sexual and gender fluidity agenda are finding themselves excluded."

Miranda quoted Joe Carolan, a former maths teacher at Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts, another "Safe School". He quit his job in protest at the program, saying the banning of "hetero-normative" language such as "mum and dad" is just the start.

"The whole program is marketed as being about creating safe schools but it's creating the opposite," he said. "It's promoting extreme gender ideology that's harmful to students in adolescence who are already going through issues and this is complicating things a lot more."

Cheltenham Girls High has a significant number of Asian students whose parents have been deeply upset by the ostracism and bullying of those who disagree with the "Safe Schools" agenda.

Chinese concern about "Safe Schools" is believed to be a key reason why two inner-west Sydney electorates with many Chinese constituents re-elected Liberal MPs, while nearby seats went to Labor.

Labor had fully endorsed "Safe Schools", promising to increase federal funding. By contrast, the Coalition announced significant restrictions, including a requirement for parental consent. Education minister Birmingham said funding would cease when the contract signed by Labor in June 2013 ended next year.

But the evidence of harm is already so great that the program and its funding should be cancelled immediately.

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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Contents

Census bias 2
Barnaby Joyce: election winner.....3
Who is Barnaby Joyce.....3
Will there be a plebiscite on marriage? 3
Letters.....4
Physical discipline: is it ever OK? ..... A
Nat: Election survey 'helpful'.....5
Vic : Assisted suicide backed by committee 5
Tas: Pro-lifer handed guilty verdict....5
WA: Civil advocates planned 5
NSW: Sydney girls' school bans 'girls' 5
Qld: FAVA submission defends human life... 5
SA: Religious freedom under threat...5
'Safe Schools': a parent speaks out....6
Obituary: Steve Stevens DFC 7
Our stories 8

Barnaby Joyce: election winner

The federal Coalition's narrow victory under Malcolm Turnbull on 2 July – by a margin of just one seat – would not have been possible without the increased vote for the Nationals under Barnaby Joyce.

Overall, the Liberal party lost 15 seats, while the more conservative Nationals gained an extra seat. The Liberals had stuck to their "jobs and growth" slogan, while the Nationals campaigned strongly on issues including national security, the controversial "Safe Schools" program and free speech.

Nationals leader and Deputy PM Barnaby Joyce is pro-life and pro-family. The increased vote for his party means he now has greater influence in Cabinet.

By contrast, the vote for anti-life, anti-natural-marriage Greens has dropped. They still have one seat in the House of Representatives, but failed to win two or more as they had hoped. There are likely to be seven Greens senators in the new parliament, down from the previous ten.

While Labor under Bill Shorten increased its number of House of Representatives seats from 55 to 69, Labor's primary vote was the second lowest since 1930.

But if primary votes for Liberal, Labor and Greens parties fell, votes for minor parties soared.

Pauline Hanson's One Nation has won at least one and possibly three Senate seats – nearly tripling One Nation's previous Queensland vote. In an interview on the *Kyle and Jackie O* radio show on 1 June, Pauline said she'd stick with marriage "the way it is now". She wants a referendum on marriage, or at least a plebiscite, so all Australians can have their say.

Tasmania's outspoken Jacqui Lambie has regained her Senate seat. She shares Pauline Hanson's support for natural marriage and a plebiscite. However Victoria's Derryn Hinch – the "human headline" – has also been elected to the Senate, but supports same-sex "marriage" and a parliamentary vote.

The Nick Xenophon Team has won one SA seat in the House of Representatives and three SA Senate seats – an amazing result, reflecting deep voter distrust of both major parties in that state.

Lawyer Nick Xenophon was initially elected to the SA Legislative Council in 1997 on a "No Pokies" platform, after a disabled client lost all his compensation to gaming machines. Now a federal senator, Xenophon has won strong media support as an advocate for the underdog. Yet he is not a "centrist" – his voting record shows he has often sided with extreme left-wing Greens against the Coalition. He is a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, but supports same-sex "marriage" and opposes a plebiscite.

The new Senate voting system has greatly prolonged the time needed to count votes and preferences. As *VoxPoint* goes to press, pro-family parties including the Christian Democratic Party and Family First still have a chance to win a Senate seat.



Barnaby Joyce (left) talks with FamilyVoice's Ros and David Phillips about "Safe Schools" in August, 2015

Who is Barnaby Joyce?

Deputy PM Barnaby Joyce is the Nationals Member for New England in NSW, where he grew up.

Back in 2004, Barnaby Joyce was an accountant living in the town of St George in outback Queensland. He was a Nationals Senate candidate in the 2004 federal election, placed in the "unwinnable" fourth spot on the Coalition's Queensland ticket. But amazingly, he succeeded.

Three days before his Senate debut on 1 July 2005, Barnaby was the keynote speaker at a Queensland Festival of Light (now FamilyVoice) dinner in Brisbane. The father of four, married to Natalie, told his audience of his committed Christian faith.

"I truly believe God has a purpose for my life," he said.

Questions flowed thick and fast at the end of Barnaby's speech, and he answered them all. Below are two examples:

With the breakdown of marriage, will "alternative" families be good or bad for children?

For three million years, children have been brought up well in families headed by a mother and a father – because it works. Why do some people suddenly think we should try something else?

Should there be 50:50 shared parenting after divorce, with children equally split between mothers and fathers?

Deep down, almost all kids want their mum and dad to stay together – and that should be our ultimate goal. A child needs balance – both a mother and a father. Both parents should be allowed to be near their children. Living arrangements should be about the needs of the child, not the needs of a mother who wants to get back at the father, or vice versa.

More recently, parents have been encouraged by Barnaby Joyce's opposition to the ideology underlying the so-called "Safe Schools" program – and his strong support for the man-woman meaning marriage has had since the beginning of history.

Will there be a plebiscite on marriage?

Having won the election, PM Malcolm Turnbull has a mandate to hold a plebiscite on the meaning of marriage.

But before the election, opposition leader Bill Shorten said Labor would not support a plebiscite on the issue. He planned instead to introduce a bill to legalise same-sex "marriage" in the new parliament's first week of sitting – which begins on 30 August.

A plebiscite (or referendum) would require a special bill to be passed by both houses of parliament. Such a bill could pass the House of Representatives, but is less likely to do so in the new Senate.

Federal Attorney-General George Brandis has indicated that if the Senate refuses to pass a plebiscite bill, the government would refuse to pass a same-sex "marriage" bill in the House of Representatives. Activists would then have to wait for another three years to resolve the issue.

Letters to the editor



'Safe Schools' review

Thank you for your letter regarding the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program.

I appreciate that your signatories and some in the wider community have concerns about the program. The Government expects that parents have confidence in the resources used in their children's education. To that end, the Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, has asked that an independent review of the program's material be conducted to examine its suitability.

Minister Birmingham has written to state and territory education ministers, asking them to confirm that parents are being consulted before schools introduce the program.

Malcolm Turnbull
Prime Minister of Australia

Exposing 'Safe Schools'

Thank you for the way you have been exposing the Safe Schools Coalition program content. Many people don't know anything at all about it – even mothers of school children. Sadly, some of them don't *want* to know.

Betty Tobin
Holland Park, Qld

How the Grinch stole childhood

Thankfully I grew up in the 80s – a time when we entertained ourselves, used our imagination, got bored, and learned patience and respect.

Today's kids have unbelievable school rules and political correctness to deal with. Schools have banned high-fives, hugging, clapping, Christmas carols, junk food, climbing trees, playing tag, whistles, swings, skipping ropes, and cartwheels. Teachers can't refer to parents as mum or dad, while female students can't be referred to as girls.

There is a gender fairy who says no one can tell you what gender you are, only you know. Gender has been (re)defined as "how you feel inside." We've gone from tolerance to insanity at the discretion of the school principal. Let kids be kids!

[Name supplied]
Perth, WA

Babies left to die

Our own PM didn't even know that late-term aborted babies are being left to die. This was revealed on ABC's *Q&A* program broadcast just before the elections.

Queensland's Minister of Health, Cameron Dick, stated that 27 babies aged five months gestation or more survived late-term abortions in Queensland. These babies were not rendered care and allowed to die.

This horrific situation needs to be addressed. Think of the mother going through such a traumatic experience of a late-term abortion. Think of the anguish of medical staff who were told to let the baby die. Think of the traumatised baby.

These babies are wanted by couples would love to adopt a child, but there are virtually none available in this country. Another solution is to give practical help to mothers who may be pressured into an abortion. I personally know of mothers who have regretted terminating their pregnancy because no-one offered a supportive alternative

Carolyn Simmons
Nailsworth, SA

Strange values

Earlier this year, 86 men, women and children were shot or burned to death in a Nigerian village by Boko Haram. How much coverage did this atrocity get in the Australian media? If I hadn't seen it on the BBC's website, I would never have known.

But when 49 men are shot in an Orlando nightclub, the media erupt with endless columns, saturation on TV and radio, and buildings lit up around the world. A thinking person might reasonably ask why? Are Nigerian lives of no value, while American lives are priceless? It seems we have a strange set of values.

Arthur Comer
Sebastopol, Vic

Keep up the good fight

Thank you for your fight against Queensland MP Rob Pyne's terrible abortion bill. I wonder if he knows about the methods used to murder these babies.

Audrey Sheffield
Mysterton, Qld

'Marriage equality' is a delusion

Heterosexual relationships are unique in their gene combining potential. This is a fact – it is not judgemental or discriminatory.

Gene combining by two persons is the foundation of biological families. This imparts responsibilities requiring legislative involvement, to ensure the rights of the participants are protected. These rights include those of children to be, barring accidents, nurtured by their two biological parents.

These responsibilities have always been the only justification for the existence of state marriage legislation.

All couple relationships based on love and physical attraction deserve respect. But if a relationship cannot lead to creating a biological family, it is not relevant to the Marriage Act.

Rene Vandervaere
Mosman, NSW

Election survey

Thank you for your election survey, voting tips and information. I feel like for the first time ever I have voted properly, been totally organised, and voted well.

Carol Zuidema
Berry's Creek, Vic

Gender benders

The 1970s gave us the gender benders who took offence at everything they considered sexist, like gentlemen opening doors for women and giving up their seats for them, and Christians praying to God the *Father*.

Giving in to feminists was a mistake, for nothing is ever enough. Successive governments have employed thought police to eliminate anything anyone might consider offensive.

Men and women are equal, but different. Enforcing same-sex "equality" has deprived women of discriminations favouring, not disadvantaging them, while robbing men of their role as providers and protectors of women and children.

What next? Feminists could object to the "women and children first" rule as it's definitely sexist – but who gains from enforcing their socialist gender-free equality?

Jackie Butler
Wynnum, Qld

A very useful resource

Thank you very much for sending me 50 copies of Dr van Gend's *VoxBrief* on *The dangers of redefining marriage* (May 2016). I have been able to place some in the foyer of my church as well as handing them out after one of the services and sending some to others to distribute at their churches.

The *VoxBrief* provides excellent information – with a nice tone, as well.

Pamela Stamm
Montmorency, Vic

Marriage Reality

Marriage Reality - what a great slogan!

Jean and David Stone
Champion Lakes, WA

Physical discipline: is it ever OK?



by Roslyn Phillips, BSc DipEd

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VoxBrief August 2016

FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

In March 2014, an Adelaide father faced court on an aggravated assault charge for smacking his 12-year-old son.

The father – an Air Force pilot "of excellent character and work ethic" – shared custody of his son with his former wife, whose approach to parenting he considered "very laissez-faire".

By contrast, the father set firm boundaries about bed times, TV and computer use, meals and chores. He did this out of love, trying to instil self-discipline to his son – along with values including respect, dignity and integrity.

However his son did not like being corrected. He was adamant that he was right and his father was in the wrong. His father punished him by giving him "time-out" – but was frustrated when this did not work.

Matters came to a head when, over lunch, the boy threw a tantrum about his food and showed disrespect to his father and stepmother.

The pilot then smacked the boy three times — once on his bare thigh, twice on his shorts — saying: "If you're going to act like a four-year-old, I'll treat you like a four-year-old!".

The boy said in evidence that the pain in his leg was not serious. It hurt a little bit for a day, and the redness lasted two days. His thigh did not bruise.

However the boy's mother reported the incident to police. A magistrate convicted the father of assault, discharging him without further penalty.

The conviction seriously damaged the pilot's future career prospects. He appealed to the South Australian Supreme Court, asking for the magistrate's ruling to be overturned.



The Supreme Court of South Australia

He was greatly relieved on 21 March 2016, when Justice David Peek ruled in his favour.

Justice Peek found that the magistrate had erred in 2014. The unreasonable application of force for "malice or revenge" was a criminal act, the judge said, but genuinely disciplining a child of appropriate age and size for the punishment was not.

Justice Peek said the magistrate had correctly noted that the father's motive was genuine, but had incorrectly decided his actions were unreasonable.

"If one can ever safely say that something is as old as mankind, that something might be parental correction of children," he said.

There has long been a fundamental question as to the extent to which the law should intrude into such areas. "While it may be that some children ... may be too old for physical parental correction, such an argument does not extend to a 12-year-old boy," Justice Peek said. The aggravated assault conviction carried significant, life-affecting consequences for the pilot. It was unwarranted.

"Many persons might be unable to comprehend how a parent could even be charged in such a situation," he said. "(They) would believe that a finding of aggravated assault would have to be based on conduct very much more serious than that …

"The plain fact is that individual Magistrates and Judges may not unilaterally abolish or constrain the defence because of personal views they may hold as to the undesirability of any physical parental correction of a child."[1]

'Experts' disagree

Many Australians welcomed Justice Peek's ruling. In a subsequent online poll, an overwhelming 91% voted to support smacking as a valid form of child discipline.[2]

However many social workers and paediatricians have been strident in their opposition. Australian Childhood Foundation chief executive Dr Joe Tucci is not surprised by the public opinion polls on the issue, but says smacking is never OK.

"(Child) discipline is absolutely essential, but not by physical force," he says. "It is impossible to draw a line in the sand to separate smacking and assault. There is much research to highlight that physical punishment can hinder a child's development."[3]

Dr Tucci is not alone. In December 2013, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child tabled a report recommending that Australia abolish the right of parents to use reasonable chastisement when disciplining children.[4]

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) agrees. It is actively campaigning against smacking, telling delegates to its 2015 Congress: "Despite the temporary effects [of smacking], there is the risk that a parent may hit harder the next time and the next."[5]

RACP spokesman Dr Kim Oates, an Emeritus Professor of Paediatrics at Sydney University, has called on health professionals to lead the charge against smacking.

"All children need discipline, we're absolutely clear about that," Dr Oates told ABC Radio National program *Life Matters* on 25 May 2015. "But physical punishment is just one form of discipline. All parents who've smacked their children know it works in the short-term, but long-term it's not an effective measure."

Dr Oates conceded that smacking may not cause harm in individual children, but claimed physical punishment teaches

children that violence is an effective means of imposing their will on others.[6]

Are smacking alternatives harmless?

Are claims by these professionals supported by valid evidence? And are alternative methods of child discipline – such as reprimands, shaming, "time out", "naughty spots", grounding and withdrawal of privileges, more effective than smacking as well as free from harm?

A 2013 peer-reviewed Oklahoma State University study examined three recent studies of 12 disciplinary tactics parents could use instead of smacking.[7]

Researchers Robert Larzelere and Ronald Cox found that none of the smacking alternatives "was ever associated with reduced child behaviour problems".

Significantly, seven of the 12 "predicted significantly worse behaviour problems in at least one analysis. Two studies found that two corrective actions by professionals – psychotherapy and Ritalin – looked as harmful as spanking when analysed in the same way."

Other studies showed that grounding, expressing disappointment, yelling or scolding were associated with as many significantly adverse outcomes as frequent smacking. Time-out and shaming were also associated with internalising problems.[8]

Larzelere and Cox found that many studies purporting to show harms from smacking, including non-abusive smacking, had been poorly designed. They were often not randomised. They did not take into account such factors as the child's nature and behaviour before the correctional tactic was applied.

"Parents are less likely to use corrective actions when children do well in school... do not smell of tobacco smoke, are not at risk for precocious sex, demonstrate trustworthiness with non-deviant peers, are cooperative, and respond well to reasoning. Quite simply, parents do not need to use corrective actions when there are no problems to correct," the researchers said.[9]

In other words, a study may observe that a child who has not received any physical discipline is well adjusted – ignoring the possibility that the child by nature was so compliant that even mild discipline was rarely needed.

They pointed out that failure to take such factors into account makes all corrective disciplinary actions look more harmful than they actually are. They found that studies criticising smacking failed to investigate alternative tactics that parents could use in similar disciplinary situations.

"Analyses of the effect of time-out should drop children who are so well behaved that none of their parents ever considers using a negative disciplinary consequence," they said.[10]

Larzelere and Cox conclude: "As a result of inherent selection bias, most longitudinal analyses are biased against corrective actions that parents use to address perceived child problems. This bias can lead to unjustified or even counter-productive recommendations about corrective parental actions."[11]

Positive outcomes from light smacking

A 2007 University of Otago longitudinal study of 1037 children born in Dunedin, NZ, in 1972-3 found that those who were lightly smacked on an arm, leg or bottom had similar or slightly better outcomes in terms of aggression, substance abuse, adult convictions and school achievement than those who were not smacked at all.[12]

Lead author Dr Jane Millichamp said her study "appeared to be the first in the world to separate out those who had been smacked with an open hand".[13]



A large US study reported similar results in 2013, finding that children who are smacked before the age of six perform better at school when they are teenagers. They are also more likely to do voluntary work and to want to go to university than those who have never been physically disciplined.[14]

The Christchurch Health and Development longitudinal study, which followed up 1265 children born in Christchurch in mid-1977, found no difference in outcomes between moderate and no physical punishment. The researchers concluded: "It is misleading to imply that occasional or mild physical punishment has long term adverse consequences."[15]

A 2013 New York study found that the perceived negative effects of harsh physical discipline were offset by the child's feeling of being loved. Maternal warmth has a protective effect.[16]

University of California psychologist Dr Diana Baumrind told the 2001 annual meeting of the American Psychological Association that studies cited by opponents of smacking do not adequately distinguish the effects of smacking as practised by non-abusive parents from the impact of severe physical punishment and abuse. She said she does not advocate smacking, but social scientists have "overstepped the evidence" in claiming that spanking causes lasting harm to a child.[17]

Dr Baumrind analysed data from a long-term study of more than 100 families and found that mild to moderate spanking had no detrimental effects when confounding factors such as abusive parents were separated out.

She commented: "When parents are loving and firm and communicate well with the child, the children are exceptionally competent and well adjusted, whether or not their parents spanked them as preschoolers."

She said that without compelling evidence that spanking is harmful, parents should be free to rear their children in accordance with their own values and traditions.[18]

What happens when smacking is banned?

In 1979, Sweden was the first nation to ban smacking. Since then, more than 40 other countries including Germany, Austria, New Zealand, The Netherlands and Spain have followed suit. Some reports are not reassuring.

Sweden

While Swedish government sources claim that the smacking ban has been successful, an Ohio State University researcher found in 2009:

"One year after the spanking ban, not only were Swedish parents resorting to pushing, grabbing, and shoving more than US parents, but they were also beating their children twice as often.

"By 1988, rates of physical child abuse in Sweden had risen to three times the U.S. rate. Moreover, from 1979 to 1994, Swedish children under seven endured an almost sixfold increase in physical abuse.

"Accordingly, many Swedes do not believe the spanking ban has reduced child abuse. Indeed, researchers are now realizing that permissive parents are the most likely to resort to injurious, 'explosive attacks of rage.'

"Such parents apparently become violent because they feel they can 'neither control the child's behavior nor tolerate its effect upon themselves'."[19]

A 2013 peer-reviewed study in the *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology* has revealed a dramatic rise in cases of criminal assaults on minors since the Swedish smacking ban came into effect in 1979. The assault increases (2010

compared with 1981) included:

- 22 times as many cases of physical child abuse (up 55% in the first eight years after the ban);
- 24 times as many assaults by minors against minors (up 114% in the first eight years); and
- 73 times as many rapes of minors under the age of 15 (up 92% in the first eight years).[20]

It seems that Sweden's ban on smacking has eroded parental ability to use *any* form of child discipline. In 2000, only 31% of Swedish children aged 10 -12 believed their parents had the right to use even "grounding" as punishment. The perceived right of parents to threaten to forbid something decreased from almost 39% to under 4% in the same study.[21]

New Zealand

On 21 June 2007, the New Zealand parliament amended the Crimes Act to abolish the right of parents to use reasonable physical discipline on their children. Section 59 now states:

(1) Every parent of a child and every person in place of the parent of a child is justified in using force if the force used is reasonable in the circumstances and is for the purpose of –

(a) for the purpose of preventing or minimising harm to the child or another person; or

(b) preventing the child from engaging or continuing to engage in conduct that amounts to a criminal offence; or

(c) preventing the child from engaging or continuing to engage in offensive or disruptive behaviour; or

(d) performing the normal daily tasks that are incidental to good care and parenting.

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) or in any rule of common law justifies the use of force for the purpose of correction.

(3) Subsection (2) prevails over subsection (1).

(4) To avoid doubt, it is affirmed that Police have the discretion not to prosecute complaints against the parents of a child or persons in place of the parents of a child in relation to an offence involving the use of force against a child, where the offence is considered to be so inconsequential that there is no public interest in proceeding to a prosecution.[22]

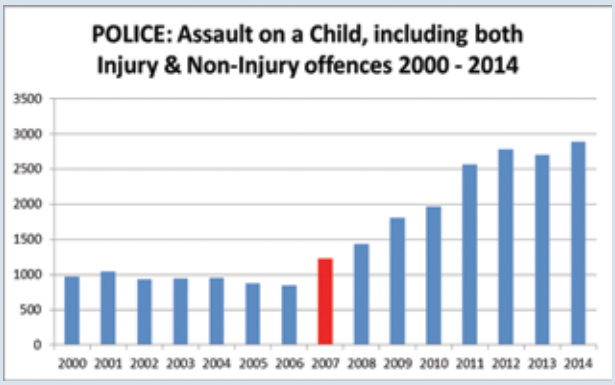
Bob McCoskrie, director of Family First New Zealand, says most NZ parents do not understand the law's confusing and contradictory wording. His 2016 research paper, "Defying Human Nature: An Analysis of New Zealand's 2007 Anti-Smacking Law", documents the widespread confusion, injustice, and disturbing increase in serious child abuse that has followed the change in law.[23]

The 2007 anti-smacking bill was introduced by NZ Green Party MP Sue Bradford and backed by Helen Clark's Labour government and most of John Key's National Party opposition. The Nationals supported an amendment to clarify the bill's confusing wording – making it clear, among other things, that smacking would be an offence only if it caused injury that was "more than transitory and trifling". The amendment was defeated, but the Nationals still supported the bill.

> **'An overwhelming majority of New Zealanders voted "no" to a smacking ban.'**

John Key won the 2008 and two subsequent NZ elections. Despite evidence to the contrary, he claims that the law does not ban light smacks.[24] He has not sought to amend the confusing wording that has led to convictions for mild physical discipline.[25]

An overwhelming majority (87%) of New Zealanders voted No to 2009 citizens' initiated referendum question: "Should a smack as part of good parental correction be a criminal offence?" However the referendum result was not binding, and a subsequent government review of section 59 ignored evidence of significant problems.[26] The anti-smacking law remains unamended.



Child assaults have increased dramatically in NZ since the 2007 smacking ban

Bob McCoskrie's analysis of the impact of the anti-smacking law is disturbing. "According to the police reviews for the five years up to mid-2012, there have been seven prosecutions for a smack on a nappy, smacks on the leg or smacks on the bottom, with no physical injuries at all," he says.

"Other prosecutions have included open hand smacks just above or below the bottom, and even a smack on the back of a hand…

"The other huge concern expressed by police themselves is the increase in false allegations of assault. This may come from neighbours or even the children themselves."[27]

Even when minor penalties are imposed, the ramifications can be severe. They can include loss of reputation, employment, or custody. McCoskrie cites several examples of the impact of the NZ law, including the following two reports:

1) A grandfather was charged and convicted of assaulting his grandson for tipping him out of a bean bag-type chair in order to 'get him moving'.

[The boy] had refused to turn the TV volume down and then refused to turn the TV off when asked. The grandchild rang 111. The grandmother and grandchild pleaded with the police not to take granddad away, yet he was held in prison cells for 2 nights, then bailed back home, despite police objections!

His lawyer advised him to plead guilty to avoid cost and hassle.

An Aussie dad's story[28]

I used to punish my children by verbally abusing them. That cut them to ribbons. I did more damage to my children by shouting at them than physical discipline ever did.

Now I don't shout at my children. I just say, "Do it." If they don't, they receive physical discipline, just enough to hurt.

My wife and I don't do it in anger – even if we have to wait two or three hours. We don't do it in public – we wait until we get home. We do it in love. We pray before, and we pray afterwards. My children are now obeying me quickly and we rarely have to punish them.

Proverbs 29:15 says: *The rod of correction imparts wisdom.* Proverbs 29:17 says: *Discipline your son and he will give you peace.* Proverbs 20:11 says: *Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.*

When I was growing up, people used to call me a ratbag. Well, I lived up to their expectations. I became the biggest ratbag there was. It is important to discipline our children to be obedient, so that we help their conduct to be pure and right.

We don't use rewards any more. We used to. We had an obedience chart – if they did the right thing, they got two ticks. But they got bored with that, so we increased it to ticks and a biscuit and perhaps a nice toy at the end of the week, depending how desperate we were.

But then we realised that for a child, obedience is its own reward. They are rewarded by the attitude of their parents, in their personality and by their inner confidence in the knowledge that they have obeyed their mum and dad.

God himself is their reward. He said: *Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land…*[29]

2) My daughter went through a difficult patch and became highly rebellious, including wagging school. She was picked up by the Police whilst wagging and taken to the Police Station and was highly belligerent towards them. I took her home in the car and attempted to communicate with her as we drove.

She refused to talk and responded to everything with a "yeah right". To get her attention I smacked her once on the leg with an open hand and said "listen to me – this is serious."

The next day she again wagged school and went instead to CYF [ChildYouth and Family: NZ social services] encouraged by her friend, and told them I had 'assaulted' her. Despite my explanation to CYF, they asked the police to charge me. The officer who had charged me visited me at my home expressing concern about charging me but as I had admitted giving her a smack and the way the law was worded he had very little leeway.

I was convicted of assault but discharged without further penalty. My daughter never thought it would go so far and has admitted to CYF that it was purely "I'll get you"-based.

"The proposal to ban smacking was motivated by a commendable desire to reduce child abuse – a desire we all share," McCoskrie says.[30] "But since the anti-smacking law was passed in 2007, child abuse reports have increased significantly. In addition:

- The mental wellbeing of youth in terms of suicide and self-harm continues to be a huge concern.
- A survey in 2011 – four years after the law was passed - found that almost a third of parents of younger children say that their children have threatened to report them if they were smacked. Also, almost one in four parents of younger children say that they have less confidence when dealing with unacceptable behaviour from their children since the anti-smacking law was passed. There has been a number of organisations expressing concern about children physically threatening their parents.
- Two out of three New Zealanders say they would flout the law, and three out of four New Zealanders want the law amended.
- The overwhelming majority of New Zealanders reject the notion that the anti-smacking law will reduce rates of child abuse in any significant way.
- Australia, with five-times the population of NZ, has just over double the incidence of child abuse – without a smacking ban.

"In summary, there is not a single social indicator relating to the abuse of children that has shown significant or sustained improvement since the passing of the law. They've continued to get worse, in some cases a lot worse.

"Those working on the frontline in our communities are not seeing any significant improvement – in fact, they're concerned about the ongoing unacceptably high levels of abuse, and believe that child abuse is still significantly under-reported."[31]

Conclusion

As emeritus professor Kim Oates has said, "All children need discipline."[32]

But there are many forms of child discipline – including reprimands, shaming, withdrawal of love, time-out, grounding and chores, as well as smacks. All of these forms can be abusive, especially if used to excess. Is it helpful to ban just one form of child discipline such smacks, even mild ones, in order to prevent or minimise child abuse?

Valid research increasingly says no. Evidence from Sweden and New Zealand shows that abuse rates – including child-on-child abuse – have soared following the introduction of smacking bans.

Moreover, a re-evaluation of studies purporting to find smacking harms has indicated poor research design – a failure to distinguish between mild smacks and frequent abusive beatings, and a failure to take into account the personalities and family environments of children studied – and whether the method of discipline was administered calmly and consistently, or angrily and arbitrarily.

Gold standard longitudinal research has shown that mild smacks during childhood do not cause harm and may help children develop into well-adjusted, successful adults.

Parental love is also important. A recent US study found that maternal love and affection ameliorated the harmful effects of harsh child discipline.

Before June 2007, New Zealand law, like current Australian common law, allowed parents to use reasonable physical discipline when correcting their children's misbehaviour.

Nine years later, New Zealand's smacking ban has not produced the intended decrease in child abuse, and has unfairly branded some loving parents as criminals. Sweden's smacking ban has likewise failed to lower abuse rates, and has even eroded parents' ability to enforce any form of discipline.

Australia should firmly reject any call to ban reasonable physical discipline by parents.

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National: Election survey 'helpful'

The FamilyVoice election survey website received thousands of visitors in the lead-up to the recent federal election.

FamilyVoice sent ten questions on issues relating to family, faith and freedom to all candidates with an email address (more than 1400) as well as the headquarters of significant parties.

"The results, particularly for the major parties, were quite revealing," FamilyVoice research officer Ros Phillips said. "The definition of marriage marked a big divide – with the Coalition promising a plebiscite compared with Labor wanting same-sex 'marriage' law passed within 100 days.

"Many supporters told us our survey was particularly helpful for deciding preferences under the new Senate voting system."

Vic: Committee backs assisted suicide

FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens says legalising assisted suicide – as recommended by a Victorian parliamentary committee investigating end of life choices – could have a disastrous impact on depressed Victorian youth.

"I pray that MPs will reject this recommendation," Mr Stevens said. "It would send the message that suicide is the answer to their problem – even if the new law does not apply to their case."

The report of the Legislative Council committee was not unanimous. Two dissenters – Inga Peulich and Daniel Mulino – wrote carefully argued minority reports.

"If we really care, we need to kill the pain – not the patient!" Peter Stevens said.

Tas: Pro-lifer 'guilty' of peaceful protest

FamilyVoice Tasmania Jim Collins says the guilty verdict handed down to Graham Preston in Hobart (27/7/16) will have a chilling effect on freedom of speech.

Mr Preston was fined $3000 by the Hobart Magistrates Court for breaching Tasmania's draconian abortion exclusion-zone law.

He was arrested in April 2015 for standing peacefully near an abortion clinic, holding a sign saying: "Everyone has the right to life, Article 3 Universal Declaration of Human Rights."



Pro-lifer Graham Preston: fined $3000

The back said: "Every child has the right to life, Article 6 Convention on the Rights of the Child."

"This decision undermines the fundamental right to protest, which is an essential part of a robust democracy," Mr Collins said. "Even silent prayerful protest is banned under these draconian laws."

Mr Collins said a lot of people would see the Preston verdict as a double standard, pointing out that charges against former Greens leader Bob Brown were dropped after he was arrested for allegedly protesting in a logging exclusion zone.

"It's an indictment on our society if trees are considered more valuable than human babies," he said.

Qld: FAVA submission defends human life

FamilyVoice has sent a submission defending the rights of unborn children to a Queensland parliamentary committee investigating a bill to decriminalise abortion.

The submission argued that the right to life is the most basic and fundamental of all human rights, and that human life begins at conception.

"You only have to view a modern ultrasound of an unborn baby to realise it is a real human being," said FamilyVoice national research officer Ros Phillips.

"The tragic reality is that abortion ends the life of innocent humans, including some who can survive outside the womb," she said.

SA: Religious freedom under threat

A FamilyVoice submission to the South Australian Law Reform Institute (SALRI) was among hundreds calling for keeping or strengthening religious exemptions to equal opportunity laws.

FamilyVoice and others argued that existing provisions in the *SA Equal Opportunity Act* unjustly restrict an individual's freedom of conscience, religion and association. Disturbingly, the SALRI report largely ignored this majority view.

FamilyVoice SA/NT director David d'Lima said the Weatherill government would do well to respect the concerns of a majority of stakeholders.

"Faith-based schools should remain free to appoint staff whose lives and beliefs are in accord with the school's ethos," he said.

"Parents should continue to have the right to determine the religious and moral education of their children."

NSW: Sydney parents oppose 'Safe Schools'

FamilyVoice has praised Cheltenham Girls High School parents and teachers who have spoken out against the "Safe Schools" program that is being implemented without parental consent.

The parents conveyed their concerns to their local state MP Damien Tudehope. They did not want to be named lest their daughters be victimised.

The Daily Telegraph (19/7/16) reported that teacher at a school staff meeting last term had read out parts of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act. She indicated that teachers could be breaking the law if they did not support the decisions of LGBTI students. Staff were advised not to use words such as "girls", "ladies" and "women".

Epping Liberal MP Damien Tudehope told *VoxPoint* that the "Safe Schools" program does not promote respect for the rights of people who disagree with it.

"There is certainly, rightly or wrongly, a fear of victimisation as a consequence of speaking out about this program – particularly in our migrant communities who may lack the confidence to challenge the school due to cultural or languages barriers," he said.

WA: Civic advocates program in planning

New WA FamilyVoice field officer Darryl Budge has taken on the planning of a WA civic advocates training program to help people connect with their local federal MPs.

Darryl, who has been a journalist with *Challenge News*, will expand on the work of David Lowe and Gary Kleyn. He has been meeting with Christian leaders and interested parties to develop the most effective approach.

"As the marriage plebiscite looms closer, it has never been more important for FamilyVoice supporters to be engaged with public policy," Darryl Budge said.

See page 8 to find out more about Darryl's background and interests.

Why I pulled my kids from a 'Safe Schools' school

"It sounded like a lovely, lovely program with nothing to worry about. You know, an anti-bullying program helping kids with depression.

"But I actually looked under the covers and discovered that it's actually not all that. It just got more alarming the further I read along."

In an exclusive interview with *VoxPoint,* mother of two Cella White tells how the so-called "Safe" Schools Coalition program violates parental rights.



Cella White withdrew her children from Frankston

You initially thought it seemed like a lovely program. How long did it take you to realise there was a darker side to it?

Safe Schools seeks to change language with invented pronouns. As a measure of "respect", they suggest children ask a person's pronoun before addressing them. This could be the usual pronouns we know like he, she or they, or fictitious pronouns like ze, zir or per, etc.

After watching the "Safe Schools" pronoun video, I expressed my concerns about the program in an education meeting at my kids' school. But my concerns weren't heeded.

"Safe Schools" indicates that gender is fluid, that it's on some kind of a vast spectrum, something for an individual to choose and irrelevant to one's biology. I saw a motto, "Genitals Don't Equal Gender". There are apparently different gender identities, not just male and female anymore. Some examples are cisgender, agender, pangender, and so on.

This was certainly news to me. I reject all of this. I don't believe in gender theory. I know that it is biology that determines our gender. I don't want my children being taught falsehoods and that it's OK to deny their biology. "Safe Schools" is attempting to deconstruct gender and I deem it a potential derailment to children's healthy development.

What made you decide to share your story publicly?

I felt very wronged by our former school. They weren't hearing my concerns. I'd always had an open line of communication and super support from our local primary and secondary school. It had to be this way because some of my children have serious health and learning challenges.

It's the first time ever that I've felt helpless as a parent. I wrote a non-permission letter to our school stating that my children will not be taking any part in the "Safe Schools" program, but they overrode it. I have to sign permission slips for Panadol and photo use at my children's school, but when it comes to exposing them to harmful gender theory, I don't get a choice. I felt violated.

For some reason the school wasn't allowing me to see the changed school policies after introducing the "Safe Schools" program. The program tells children to follow their feelings especially when it comes to using sex-segregated facilities at school.

My main concern was the bathroom policy because my daughter is "day blind" and I wanted reassurance that she'd be using these facilities with born girls, not members of the opposite sex who might think they're a girl. Like all children, my children deserve privacy and dignity when using these facilities and sticking to biology is the most logical way.

> **'Safe Schools seeks to sexually liberate children within school hours, without parental consent.'**

I find the material and resources within "Safe Schools" deeply disturbing and I knew parents didn't know about this program. Parents were entitled to know, whether they agreed with me or not. The word "safe" sends out a false sense of security. Who wouldn't want a safe school? We all want safe schools, but this mind-bending program is far from safe.

I was going to do a letterbox drop in our high school zone, but came to the conclusion that the information was too rude to send out and I'd perhaps meet with the law, so I decided to go public to sound the alarm. It's not something I'd normally do, but this issue is just too serious to ignore.

You have said that this program is just an excuse to sexualise children. Why do you think the Safe Schools Coalition wants to target children in this way?

I believe "Safe Schools" seeks to sexually liberate children within school hours, without parental consent. Seeds are planted to open children's minds to issues that are way beyond what they would typically be thinking about in the first place. Their minds are pliable.

I met with Roz Ward (the architect of "Safe Schools") at the Department of Education, Victoria, and she confirmed that this program is not an anti-bullying program, but rather, a gender and sexual diversity program. I believe these two establishments seek a revolution of some sort, and it involves other people's children, where teachers (either willingly or unwillingly) are the instruments of social and cultural change.

This has been my experience. My son was sitting in his science class when the science teacher read out a note from the roll monitor. It congratulated the students for their uniform compliance in 2015. However, it went on to say that the students could now wear the uniform of their choice in 2016. He was ready for a science lesson, not cross-dressing encouragement.

What would you say to parents of children in a school that has adopted the Safe Schools Coalition program?

This is difficult because the program continues to run despite the outcry. I would urge parents to read the content from top-to-toe and then make a decision from there. Reasonably speaking, Safe Schools Coalition and its partner organisation *Minus18* cannot be separated. Safe Schools Coalition refers students to *Minus18* continually.

If parents oppose "Safe Schools", they could approach their school and outline their reasons in writing. They could secure a



Kidspot

High School over the (un)'Safe' Schools program

meeting with senior staff members, the school council, the parent group, school chaplain and/or councillor to discuss their concerns.

Some families may not be in a position to change their children's school, so I would suggest they diarise any feedback they're receiving from their children with the date, time and place.

Also, keep monitoring what your children are doing online. *Minus18* gives children advice on how to hide their computer history, which is so very deceitful and contradicts cyber safety in general. There are also eager LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) activist groups waiting online to interfere with children's thoughts, so keep this in mind.

I've met other families who have been harmed by this program, so keep everything in writing for the record.

What would you like to say to our nation's leaders?

I'd ask them if they themselves have read all of the "Safe Schools" material, and if they would like their children or grandchildren to be exposed to this program.

I would let them know that a growing number of parents are outraged that this radical program was ever introduced in the first place. Parents are now voting with their feet and leaving schools quietly. Home schooling is on the rise due to "Safe Schools". I had this confirmed by a home school provider. Why is it that some government schools are no longer safe for every child to attend?

I would ask them when the person responsible for the X-rated links on the *Minus18* website is going to be held accountable. These links included "The Tool Shed" which is an online adult sex aid shop. Both "Safe Schools" and *Minus18* are government funded initiatives for the youth of Australia, so why on earth were inappropriate X-rated links provided to minors? This is nothing short of criminal.

I'd let them know that such sensitive matters as gender and sexuality are best discussed between parents and their children at home. A parent knows their child best and they know when their child's ready for these topics.

"Safe Schools" fails to consider a child's religion, culture, background, history, vulnerability, maturity or stability. It's a total overreach by the government and this blanket approach is completely unsuitable. "Safe Schools" sends a message to parents that they are no longer first educators of their children and this is totally unacceptable.

I would ask them to scrap this program altogether and replace it with a program that's suitable for everyone.

> **"I have to sign permission slips for Panadol ... but when it comes to exposing my kids to harmful gender theory, I don't get a choice."**

What support/comments have you had from other parents following your decision to speak out?

I've had huge support from different groups in the community which has been really reassuring.

Have you been subjected to any criticism over your decision to change schools and to speak out?

Yes I have. I'm well aware that there's name-calling going on, but that's designed to silence me and anyone else who dares to step forward to question this program. My aim was to raise awareness, and many parents still remain unaware. So I'll continue to speak out.

I'm finding that people who have something negative to say haven't actually sat down to read the entire "Safe Schools" content. ■

Steve Stevens DFC, 1919 – 2016

Steve Stevens, former director of Festival of Light in SA (1978-83) and associate director in NSW (1984-5) has died aged 96 in the UK on 5 June 2016 after a long illness.

Steve was a courageous fighter pilot in World War II. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his part in relieving the city of Berlin during the terrible Soviet blockade in 1948.

After the war, Steve and his wife Kay (who died in 2012) served as pioneer missionaries in Sudan. Steve's eyesight was damaged by the oppressive heat and stress, forcing them to return to London with their four children. Later, Steve and Kay – with Malcolm Muggeridge, Mary Whitehouse and others – were among the founders of the UK Nationwide Festival of Light in 1971.

In 1978 the Stevenses flew to South Australia, where – as director and women's adviser – they put Festival of Light (now FamilyVoice) "on the map".

"Steve was a ball of energy," FamilyVoice national director Dr David Phillips says. "He and Kay travelled throughout the state, calling people to action. Steve would often ask people, 'Are you writing letters to the newspapers? Are you phoning radio stations? Are you contacting your MP?'

"Steve and Kay made a big impact on our campaign against the harm of pornography in 1978. At that time, child pornography was freely available – but we circulated a huge petition that helped achieve an SA ban," Dr Phillips said.

"Steve continued to receive our magazines until his death, and was a constant source of encouragement.

"We pray that more and more Australians will heed the Stevenses' motto – adapted from the words of the famous British statesman Edmund Burke: *Evil triumphs when good men do nothing.*" ■



Steve and Kay Stevens with **Light** *magazine in 1980*

Our Stories

Why we do what we do at FamilyVoice



"Family means life ... it means overcoming adversity together"

Matthew Gadsden

National Office Manager

What is your background?

I grew up in Dubbo, a large inland city in the central-west area of NSW. After completing year 12, I have lived in both NSW and SA, completing an Advanced Diploma in Christian Studies as well as training in accounting and bookkeeping. I married Rebecca in 2013, and we currently have one son.

Why do you think the work of FamilyVoice is important?

In an ever-changing society that is embracing more and more secular values and beliefs in the pursuit of "progress", it is important to advocate for the Christ-centred principles our nation was founded on. These principles should be reinforced by our leaders, as well as everyday Christians being equipped to communicate the grace of redeeming love in our land.

What do you treasure about family?

Family means life, it means celebration, it means overcoming adversity together. As a father and husband, I do everything I can to guide and protect my child. I know our heavenly Father does so much more for us, and it's on this basis that we should strive to raise our children to the best of our ability.

Did you know?

Matthew enjoys riding his motorbike through the hills, listening to jazz, and making a great cup of espresso.

What is your role at FamilyVoice?

As WA Field Officer, I meet with pastors and church leaders to discuss materials that help equip all Christians to connect with our culture. I will also be looking to set up an advocates program, helping FamilyVoice supporters better engage with public policy matters.

Why do you think the work of FamilyVoice is important?

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people" – Proverbs 14:34. As messengers of Jesus, we at FamilyVoice seek God's blessing on our nation – which can only continue as our laws align with God's nature and character. FamilyVoice proclaims what is good and blessed by God.

What does family mean to you?

Through the unfailing love bond of my biological family and my wife, Stephanie, I give and receive the unconditional love of God. In my experience, a person who has been abandoned by their biological parent(s) finds it very difficult to trust the kindness of their heavenly Father – whom they cannot see physically.



Darryl Budge

WA Field Officer

Did you know?

Darryl enjoys reading, researching, debating about social, moral and biblical issues, and nature walks with Stephanie.