A state newsletter of

FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

VoxLink

New South Wales

June 2017

Euthanasia bill debate may begin in August

A NSW public consultation period on whether to allow terminally ill adults to prematurly end their lives enters a new stage with a short 16-page draft bill that authorises a waiting period of just nine days.



Terminally ill NSW residents over the age of 25 will have legal access to assisted killing under draft legislation that could be up for parliamentary debate by August.

To qualify under the draft Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, the patient would have to be, in "reasonable medical judgment", expected to die from their illness within 12 months and be experiencing "extreme pain, suffering or physical incapacity to an extent unacceptable to the patient."

The decision must be signed off by two medical practitioners, including a specialist, and the patient assessed by an independent psychiatrist or psychologist on whether they are of sound mind and acted of their own free will.

During a short 48-hour cooling-off period a patient may reverse their formal decision, or "close relatives" can challenge patient eligibility in the Supreme Court. After the patient's initial request for "assistance", signing a "formal certificate" after seven days and the cooling-off period, a patient can be dead after just nine days.

If a health care provider has a conscientious objection to euthanasia for any reason, the draft bill compels them to provide a referral, and thereby encourages "doctor-shopping".

A cross-party working group of NSW MPs have unveiled the draft bill for public consultation, with the aim of introducing it to Parliament in August for debate.

The cross-party working group includes the Hon. Lynda Voltz MLC (ALP), Dr Mehreen Faruqi MLC (GNS), Mr Lee Evans MP (LIB), Mr Alex Greenwich MP (IND) and the Hon. Trevor Khan MLC (NATS).

A similar euthanasia bill in Tasmania was defeated 16-8 on May 24 – which was 44 pages long compared to just 16 in the draft NSW bill. The Tasmanian bill barred patients who had reasonable options for recovery or pain relief unlike the NSW draft bill, but it did not require professional psychiatric assessment at any stage.

FamilyVoice NSW Director Aaron Wright says the pro-death campaign is unwittingly knocking down protections against homicide that will grow ever larger.

"The poster child of their online campaign Annie Gabrielides, who is terminally ill, believes killing herself before motor neurone disease has full effect will deny the disease a 'victory'," Mr Wright observed.

"I can't speak, am left gasping for breath, and have lost control of my hands," Ms Gabrielides said.

"It won't be long before I will end up in a wheelchair. I will be trapped inside my body with my same intellect, but unable to communicate, unable to feed myself, clean myself, or even move. Within the next 12 months I face the prospect of suffering a horrible death, and this is the thing I fear more than anything else.

"I want the right to choose my ending… if I can deny this disease its last victory, it will be a fine day," she said.

"Suicide is never a victory, and never should be," Mr Wright said.

"Ms Gabrielides goes on to beam about the 'strict guidelines and safeguards' that could help usher in her death through a hypodermic needle, however no amount of safeguards can properly protect the vulnerable and elderly from coercion and pressure to end their lives.

"International human rights preclude voluntary slavery and cannibalism, so any volunteer aspect is an inadequete justification for permitting assisted killing." ■

Horrific abortion bill defeated

The NSW Legislative Council rejected Greens MP Mehreen Faruqi's anti-life bill 25-14 on May 11, reaffirming nationwide resistance to widening abortion laws.

The momentous conscience vote followed an unprecedented written petition of 56,559 signatures that was tabled by Labor MLC Greg Donnelly on May 10. The boxes of petitions were wheeled in to hushed silence in the chamber, which recognised this response as one of the largest written petitions ever presented to the NSW Parliament.

The Abortion Law Reform (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2016 would have legalised abortion up to birth, removed a doctor's right to conscientiously object, and banned roadside counselling and prayers outside abortion clinics, with penalties for the latter up to a year of prison or a $16,500 fine.

Like the failed Queensland bill, a woman's relatives or partner would have been unable to counsel against an abortion near the clinic, and sex selective abortion - typically of unborn females - would have been sanctioned.

Jaya Taki, former partner of NRL player Tim Simona, was instrumental in the bill's defeat. Mr Simona had successively coerced her to abort their baby after he allegedly said that the child would ruin his career.

In the week prior to the House's vote, Ms Taki joined an Abortion Rethink expert panel in Parliament House to say that the bill would have validated those men "who do not value women and their children".

FamilyVoice NSW State Director Aaron Wright, who helped co-ordinate the petition with Abortion Rethink, is encouraged by the growing opposition to abortion nationwide.

"More than 55,000 people in Queensland signed a similar petition earlier this year and 3,000 marched in Brisbane against abortion. In NSW more than 2,000 marched against abortion, and a Perth pro-life rally on May 23 attracted 1200 attendees. Abortion truly ends a human life and science is making that truth clearer every day." ■

‘Safe Schools’ victories are positive steps

FamilyVoice welcomes Tasmanian, NSW and SA state government action against the ideologically-driven ‘Safe Schools’ program but says greater reforms are needed.

Both NSW and Tasmania’s State Governments have wisely chosen to dump the divisive and highly-sexualised ‘Safe Schools’ program from state curricula.

NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes said the program, which currently runs in about 18 state schools, would be cancelled and replaced with a new anti-bullying strategy when federal funding for the controversial program runs out on June 30.

Mr Stokes is consulting with the education sector, including Catholic and independent schools and principal groups, about the new strategy which is expected to be rolled out in the second half of this year.

Tasmania’s Education Minister Jeremy Rockliff has told News Corp the state ‘has no plans’ to fund Safe Schools in Tasmania, once the current federal funding arrangement expires at the end of June. Currently 22 Tasmanian schools are signed up to the program

“The Tasmanian government is committed to providing a safe and inclusive school environment to support student learning and wellbeing, which is why we have invested $3 million over four years as part of the Combating Bullying budget initiative,” Mr Rockliff said.

The Liberal party in Victoria first made the decision to overturn the program, and their election promise was the impetus for NSW and Tasmania’s Liberal majority to defund the program while in power.



Meanwhile in South Australia, the program is set to continue albeit in a “revised” format funded by the State Government that will supposedly focus on actual anti-bullying measures as opposed to pushing divisive ideologies which include teaching students that gender and sexuality are fluid concepts.

Thanks to a widespread public backlash and pro-active campaigning on the part of organisations such as FamilyVoice, federal funding will cease from the end of June. However, it is expected that the program will simply be renamed and run by the State Government’s controversial SHine SA sex-education administration. *The Advertiser* reports that the Federal Government has allocated $8 million to the revised program.

“While FamilyVoice holds a position that is strongly opposed to all forms of bullying in schools – and anywhere else, for that matter – the ‘Safe Schools’ program was not about preventing bullying, but rather all about normalising and effectively promoting the same-sex agenda and the flawed idea that gender is fluid,” said National Director Ashley Saunders.

‘Gender reassignment’ a harmful fad, doctor warns

Sydney-based paediatrician and Western Sydney University Professor John Whitehall has highlighted the dangers of children undergoing potentially irreversible gender reassignment surgery.

“I think it’s a dangerous fad,” Professor Whitehall told *The Australian*.

“A dangerous behavioural fashion trend fuelled by the ideologues and fuelled by the media,” he said.

He cited a transgender lobby which is protesting to stop the Family Court from having to approve medical decisions on behalf of transgender youth.

“All of what we’re currently doing is experimental,” he said. “There’s little evidence of the positive effects. They’re saying there’s no evidence of harm.”

“Well, actually, there is.”

Professor Whitehall, who has 50 years’ experience treating young children in his capacity as a paediatrician, drew on a number of studies which indicated hormone treatment can impact the brain, affecting memory, executive function and cerebral function, The Australian reports.

He also hinted that the so-called Safe Schools program in Victoria will come at a dangerous cost.

“Even making that so-called social transition has consequences,” he said. “It nails the child to the cross. It’s very difficult to come back from that.”

Age-verification for porn sites to be implemented in the UK

The UK has taken active steps to protect young minds from the serious risks of online pornography. Australia should do the same according to Ashley Saunders.

After months of deliberation, Child Protection advocates are celebrating in the United Kingdom with new changes adopted into legislation.



Our kids need safe net access

The UK have been taking active steps to protect children from online pornography harms and on April 27, the Digital Economy Bill 2016-2017 was approved.

The legislation creates civil penalties for online pornographers who do not verify the age of their customers, and ISP level blocking of non-compliant sites.

“This is a huge win for children,” said FamilyVoice National Director Ashley Saunders commenting on the UK victory.

“We can all speak up, and call on our Government and technology companies to prevent the harms of pornography from occurring in the first place.

“This is a sensible measure that must also be implemented here in Australia in order to preserve our children’s innocence.”

PUBLISHER:

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PUBLISHED:

March, June, September, December

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PRINTER:

Openbook Howden, St Marys SA 5042

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Myths about the euthanasia debate

MYTH 1: Euthanasia and assisted suicide are not killing, they are acts of mercy.

Euthanasia refers to the deliberate action, usually by a medical professional, to end the life of another person (e.g. by lethal injection).

Assisted Suicide refers to when a person ends their own life, with the help of a medical professional (e.g. by prescribing or providing lethal quantities of drugs).

These two distinct terms are often incorporated into 'Medical Aid in Dying' or similar phrases. Whatever names you use, these are actions which have the deliberate intention to directly end a person's life: in other words, these are murderous acts which are incompatible with any form of medical care. True health care is about supporting and nurturing life from conception to natural death.

MYTH 2. Euthanasia or assisted suicide is about enabling people to 'die with dignity'.

This argument presupposes an erroneous idea about what human dignity means. Our dignity is not about being independent, autonomous, and free. It is not found in the subjective 'quality' of our lives, but in the objective fact of our being human. Nothing we can do, and nothing that can happen to us, can affect our inherent human dignity. People do not 'lose their dignity' in the face of death, pain, incapacitation, dementia, incontinence or any other limitations. Living - and dying - with true dignity means to see the inherent and inviolable worth in every human person, despite their life circumstances and to offer them the care they need. A disabled, sick or elderly person is not a 'burden' on society, but a person to be loved and cared for: a person who can teach us the where true human dignity is found.

There are many of these such people who live full and meaningful lives with the same symptoms that are labelled as 'unbearable' or 'inhuman' by so many advocates of medically assisted dying.



Ironically, euthanasia and assisted suicide denies true human dignity, and reduces it to a subjective concept measured by categories which are constantly changing in perception. The way that supporters of medically assisted use the word 'dignity' should cause us all to re-examine our understanding of human dignity, and ask ourselves if our actions towards other people, especially the sick, elderly and disabled, truly reflect our convictions. If we as a society do not witness to what true human dignity means, then calls for the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide will only get louder and stronger.

MYTH 3. Euthanasia or assisted suicide is a compassionate option for people who suffer unbearable pain at the end of life.

No-one wants to die a prolonged and agonizing death. However, according to Mary Brooksbank, the former chair of Palliative Care South Australia, "no one dying an expected death needs to die in extreme, agonising pain. If they do, it's because they haven't had access to good quality palliative care."[1] Unfortunately, even in Australia, many people still do not have access to appropriate palliative care.

Instead of offering to help end these people's lives, we should be working to provide compassionate, comprehensive and life-affirming care to all people. In some cases, it is true that it is sometimes necessary to use high doses of morphine or other drugs in order to relieve extreme pain for those in palliative care, which may have the consequence of shortening the life of the patient. However, this is very different from providing euthanasia: the intention here is to eliminate the suffering, not the sufferer. When death does occur, it is not deliberately caused by an intentionally murderous act. Rather, the medicines administered have an unintended side effect of contributing towards, but not directly causing, the person's death.

1. Dr Mary Brooksbank, palliativecare.org.au/palliative-matters/expert-opinion-the-euthanasia-debate

Early palliative care, not killing

Perth-based palliative care consultant Dr Ashwini Davray believes the proven benefits of early involvement in palliative medicine need to be more well-known.

"In one landmark study in 2010, early involvement of palliative medicine in metastatic non-small cell lung cancer resulted in improved quality of life, improved rates of depression and prolonged survival," Dr Davray said in an October 2011 article published in *Medical Forum*.

She cited how her palliative care unit treated a 78-year-old advanced lung cancer patient, who in a crisis of pain had attempted suicide, "depressed and fearful". The woman had been suffering advanced cancer for six months before admission.

After 28 days in the unit, effective pain control and referral to a psychiatrist, counsellor, chaplain and social worker, the woman was discharged "pain free", did not require suicide watch and "was thankful for her time in the unit." Two months later she entered terminal care and died peacefully.

Dr Davray says effective palliative care involves communication skills around preparing for death and spirituality.

Her team aims to create discussions on: treatment preferences; goals of care from the patient, their family and the treating team; community services after discharge; and addressing fears on the journey towards death.

"FamilyVoice urges MPs to invest in early comprehensive palliative care as the truly compassionate answer to the growing numbers of suicidal, terminally ill patients – and therefore reject assisted killing as the opposite of compassionate care," said FamilyVoice National Director Ashley Saunders.



- **Freedom of religion and belief under attack**
- **Freedom of speech based on Bible**
- **Disability advocates oppose euthanasia**

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Influencing the culture: Andrea Williams

A leading UK religious rights lawyer is recognised for her bold and articulate Christian stance in the public square.

Andrea Williams is an extraordinary Christian fighting "gallantly" to ensure that the Christian voice for justice and fairness is reflected in UK law and "stoutly defending Christians who are being persecuted simply for wanting to live their lives reflecting Christian truth," according to popular Christian blogger Archbishop Cranmer.

Andrea Williams serves as the CEO of Christian Concern and its sister organisation Christian Legal Centre.

Her passion to correct injustices against Christians is evidenced by her statements on key issues.

On silencing dissent

Andrea was a key defender of Felix Ngole – another victim of the increasing alienation of Christians from the public square.

In 2016 he was expelled from the University of Sheffield for expressing support for the biblical view of sexuality during a Facebook discussion.

Yet in an important ruling in April 2017, justice prevailed as the High Court granted permission for Felix to judicially review the University's decision to expel him.

Felix had been removed from his course. His case was dismissed at every stage of the University internal appeals procedure, and his written arguments were dismissed by a Deputy High Court Judge in March 2017.

Without the support of the Christian Legal Centre, Felix would have been left out in the cold, unable to make his case.

More importantly, this case is not just about personal justice for Felix as it has wide-reaching ramifications for the freedoms of UK Christians in all areas of public life.

Upholding the family

Andrea is a brave defender of the family: "The family is the most basic unit of civilisation. Christian theologians have called the family the 'primary cell' of human society. It would seem clear that the government has a legitimate interest in promoting a healthy marriage culture.

"In recent decades, the law has become a sword which has laid waste to the family, rather than a shield to protect it.

"Sixty years ago in the UK, 4.8 percent of babies were born outside of wedlock. Today a staggering 46.8 percent of children are born outside of wedlock. In 1952, with a population of 50 million, there were 349,308 marriages. In 2014, despite the population being 15 million people larger, only 241,100 marriages took place. In 1952 divorce was rare, affecting only 33,992 people. Today, we are seeing divorces occurring at a rate more than six times that."

Andrea observes that we see "out of control equality legislation which disproportionately targets Christians; compulsory relationships and sex education for children as young as five; eugenic reproductive technologies such as 'three-parent' babies; the erosion of free speech due to loosely worded 'hate' provisions – these are all symptoms of bad legislation creating bad culture."

Defending freedoms

In an open letter to UK Prime Minister Theresa May, Williams said that May's tenure at the Home Office saw an 'alarming' increase in Christian organisations being forced to water down or deny their ethos and 'countless' instances of Christians being side-lined.

She writes: "We saw Christians losing their public sector jobs for offering prayer or giving testimony to their faith. We saw them punished and losing their jobs in the public institutions for professing marriage to be between one man and one woman and talking of children doing best when raised by a mother and a father. In an open and free society these freedoms are not superficial but are fundamental.

"Will you consider an immediate halt to the previous government's counter-extremism measures that do not distinguish between Christianity and Islam and which will further suppress Christianity?

"Under the Government's approach, there is a tendency for some officials to view people with socially conservative views on marriage and sexuality as somehow on their way to becoming violent extremists," Andrea Williams pointed out in her communication to the British Prime Minister.

Why Christians should vote

Andrea urges believers to participate more in the public square, especially as voting in the UK is voluntary.

"Being so inundated by media can leave some voters feeling numb and apathetic. Other voters may feel that the election results are inevitable and might not see the urgent need to go out and vote.

"When looking at why elections are important, we must remember what the job of our parliamentarians entails. Beyond being our political representatives, notably, they are also our law-makers; and we must never forget that law matters. Anyone who cares about life and death issues, or mediating institutions like the family, should care about how their candidate views and votes on certain topics."



Andrea Williams, a champion of freedom

Law saves lives or takes them.

On issues like abortion, euthanasia, and others, jurisprudence can either kill people or save lives, Andrea explains.

"For anyone who believes that to be an overstatement, they need look only to the statistic 8,500,000. That is the number of abortions that have happened in the United Kingdom since British law-makers, those we put into office, legalised abortion in 1967.

"That number represents, by way of example, the current populations of Norway, Malta, Slovenia and Luxembourg combined.

"It is often said that you can't legislate morality. But this is not true. All law legislates morality. The question is, is it God's morality or man's morality? When we go to the polls, let us ask ourselves one question: whose morality is our future MP seeking to legislate? Man's, or God's?"

Andrea tours Australia in July!

NOT ASHAMED

FamilyVoice is hosting Andrea Williams on a national tour. Don't miss it!

Evening talk in Sydney
Fri. 28 July, 7:30PM

Breakfast in Wollongong
Sat. 29 July, 7:30AM

More information and bookings
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