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SA 'Safe Schools' to train teachers, not students

The SA government has announced it will fund a limited rewrite of the Safe Schools program to only train teachers, not put students through lesson plans.

State Education Minister Susan Close said on May 17 that the program's focus will be training school staff to "help them respond to and understand the issues faced by LGBTI students and create safe and supportive environments for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse people."

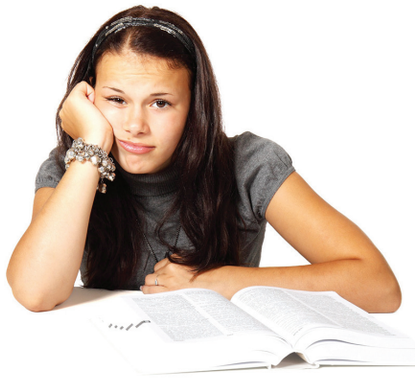
"This is a good step, but this new program still unacceptably indoctrinates teachers with the same-sex agenda," said FamilyVoice SA State Director David d'Lima.

Dr Close said that while current lesson plans would be scrapped, the Safe Schools "approach" would remain.

The new $300,000 program will be opt-in for schools. Principals must consult with the school community and seek approval from the school governing council.

A funding agreement still being finalised may require a name change and new state-based support materials, subject to intellectual property arrangements, she said.

Dr Close said the state government may not have to rewrite the program, given it was separately funding it, and so may be able to use existing resources.



FamilyVoice would like to see Safe Schools thrown out of schools entirely

Dr Close said she wants a "dedicated program" to train teachers because LGBTI students suffered an unacceptably high rate of bullying and suicide.

"This is clearly at odds with the experience of principals quoted in the Proud Schools Consultation report produced by Family Planning NSW in 2012," said David d'Lima

"Three principals seperately said, 'There's not a great deal of overt homophobia', 'not many cases of overt discrimination but there is name calling' and 'I haven't had any issues of homophobic violence at this school.'

"By far the greatest sources of bullying are body image, grades, and racial background. FamilyVoice believes that the best approach is to never engage the issue but to teach the child to block the bully'. This is the approach of Evelyn Field, an Australian psychologist and expert on bullying.

"FamilyVoice would like to see Safe Schools thrown out of schools entirely.

"The Safe Schools materials are based on a 2009 LaTrobe University position paper that claimed 7-11% of young people feel sexually attracted to people of their own sex, or are unsure. Other statistics rely on unreliable online, self-selected surveys.

"Even if true, these feelings alter with age. Not long ago, LaTrobe University found, in its 2003 Sex in Australia report of 20,000 people, 1.6 per cent of Australian men identify as homosexual and 0.9 per cent as bisexual. Among women, 0.8 per cent identified as homosexual and 1.4 per cent as bisexual." ■

Alarming reports of elder abuse

Human dignity needs to be vigorously defended, according to FamilyVoice.



Allegations of abuse within government nursing facilities reveal a systemic failure to affirm the personhood of victims and care-givers alike, according to FamilyVoice State Director David d'Lima.

"Claims of persistent abuse in the Oakden nursing home reveal a sad trend away from affirming the dignity and humanity of each person," he said.

"The loss of respect for human life occurs through a rejection of Christian assertions that each human is made by God and in his image. Consequently we have lost reverence for the vulnerable.

"But we are also witnessing loss of respect for persons who are seeking to provide care."

In a letter to Premier Jay Weatherill, David d'Lima has urged the government to seek assistance from Christian agencies that may provide support for staff who are stressed and harried in the workplace as they struggle under trying conditions.

"People go into the caring vocations with noble intentions, but sometimes find themselves mistreating their clients, owing to profound stress, impossible workloads, a lack of resources and little support," he said.

Mr d'Lima has urged the Premier to relieve the stress in government facilities by better supporting clients who in some situations could be cared for at home by their families even for a day or two each week. He urged the government to encourage family members to become more active in helping their loved-ones at care facilities.

He has also raised the issue of substance abuse as a trigger for mental health problems.

"The drug epidemic will produce far greater challenges for the mental health system if we do not take decisive action to stop the use of illicit substances."

He urged Premier Weatherill to tighten the laws against possessing, using and selling illicit drugs, especially ice and cannabis. ■

‘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:

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

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Rev Ashley Saunders

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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?



Andrea Williams, a champion of freedom

"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.

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, 8,500,000 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.

"It is often said that you can't legislate morality. But this is not true. All law legislates morality. When we go to the polls, let us ask: 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!

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