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Victoria/Tasmania

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Tas. euthanasia bill rejected

The third attempt to legalise Tasmanian euthanasia in less than a decade failed, with 16-8 vote in the lower house on May 24.

"The defeat of this latest attempt to introduce medical killing was a welcome victory. It was a passionate debate, but eventually a win with national importance," said FamilyVoice Tasmania Director Jim Collins.

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2016, co-sponsored by former ALP Premier Lara Giddings and Greens Leader Cassy O'Connor, was exposed by a range of MPs as containing fundamental flaws.

Labor MP Shane Broad cited the psychological impacts of sickness and suffering patients that are better addressed with pain-management and palliative care.

Guy Barnett MP argued that the bill was "seriously defective" and would "demolish the underlying principle for doctors: do no harm".

Liberal Health Minister Michael Ferguson voiced broader concerns with the push for euthanasia, telling Parliament he doubted it was possible to come up with a failsafe law.

"The reality is (this is) manslaughter, suicide and murder," he warned, citing concerns about the welfare of vulnerable people in particular.

After a failed attempt to send the Bill to a committee (lost 7:17), the final vote at 9pm was a massive rejection, 16 votes to 8. The bill was supported by all three Greens MPs, three from ALP and Franklin Liberal MLA, Nic Street.

"Obviously, this is a sensitive and emotive issue – and with an ageing population, end of life care does need a more proactive and caring approach in our nation," Jim Collins said.

"But we need to remember, saying no to euthanasia is not a sign of callous indifference or deprivation of human rights."

According to 33 of Australia and New Zealand's top palliative care practitioners, requests for assisted suicide rarely spring from uncontrolled pain, but rather from despair, a sense of loss of control, or fear of being a burden to others. Evidence shows that a person's desire for hastened death changes over time and reduces when care is good.

"A number of Tasmanian MPs referred to the recent inquiry into palliative care (the Rylah Report published in April). It recommended that the Tasmanian Parliament work to improve end of life options rather than the death-as-medical-solution approach of the pro-suicide euthanasia bill," Mr Collins said.

"As euthanasia debates in Victoria, NSW and our other states are likely to follow soon, I urge all parliamentarians to consider the realities: legalising medical death can simply never be made safe. If we want to be truly compassionate we must explore palliative care solutions. Australia can and should lead the way – but in care, not killing."

New school code

Nearly 300 Victorian schools have new transgender policy guidelines allowing the gender transition of students as young as six years of age without parental consent.

Within the program's "Guide Supporting Student Affirm Transition" (GSSAF), educators are told that it's "possible to consider a student a mature minor and able to make decisions without parental consent."

Approximately 95 of these schools are primary schools, home to six-year-olds.

The GSSF outlines which areas of a transitioning student's life should be affected within the school to compliment the radical 'changes' to the child's gender; documentation, uniforms, bathrooms, pronouns, sports teams and out-of-school events.

"Victoria has long been the most dangerous place to be in the womb, with killing of unborn children legal up to the time of birth, and some 20,000 babies aborted each year," said FamilyVoice's Victoria Director Peter Stevens.

"Now, for those Victorian children who survive the murderous onslaught of pregnancy, school is becoming the next battle ground," he said. "Daniel Andrews' Marxist-leaning government is determined to throw kids into perplexity by telling little boys they could be girls, and little girls they really might be boys."

Feminist ideologies taught in Victorian schools

FamilyVoice is concerned that parents are unaware of the Respectful Relationship P-12 program. Children as young as five are being subjected to deliberate attempts to rewrite or erase gender stereotypes through role-playing activities.

The Victorian state government is backing a new "feminist collective" strategy as part of the existing $21 million Respectful Relationships project, encompassing preschool to year 12.

This controversial program currently in 120 schools across Victoria has issued a new secondary school educational guide called 'Fightback' to counter "everyday sexism" and educate kids on "negative attitudes towards gender equality". It asserts that this is at the heart of domestic violence against women.

"These latest revelations about the harmful Respectful Relationships project in Victorian schools remind us it is agenda-driven, as it relies on 'degendering' role-playing activities beginning in preschool," said FamilyVoice Victoria State Director Peter Stevens.

"The 'Fightback' guide instructs high school kids to imagine being a stay-at-home mother, an indigenous transgender male and a male CEO, and then consider how they would feel in the role under particular circumstances, such as 'walking home alone at night' or their career being affected by having a baby. Do we really want our young schoolkids being educated to imagine themselves as transsexual? Many parents would wonder why our Premier supports this.

"A government serious about stopping violence towards women would focus on the real root causes, which include drugs and alcohol, and help implement regulation of internet pornography – 88% of popular porn scenes contain physical aggression, 94% is towards women, and 95% of the women are depicted to like it. By age 15, nearly all boys have seen hard-core internet porn. It corrupts their minds and creates demeaning violent views towards women."

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‘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.

“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.”

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

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.

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.



Our kids need safe net access

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.”

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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 suicide 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

Victorian residents can urge their MPs to oppose euthanasia using our action site: **Action.Fava.org.au**

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!

Melbourne evening talks
July 25 & 26, 7:30pm in Scoresby

Hobart Dinner
July 27, 6:30pm in Kingston

More information and bookings
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