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FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

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Doctors in schools hits parental rights

Concerns about parental consent have arisen regarding a Victorian government plan to roll out in-house doctors in 100 secondary schools across the state.

The program will allow 70,000 students – some as young as 12 – in secondary schools across the state to access the services of a GP via appointment. The GP will then decide if that young person is "mature enough to provide consent to any medical treatment."



If the GP does not deem the student to be a "mature minor" then the doctor would seek consent from a parent or carer prior to any treatment being carried out. However, program guidelines show that even if a parent "expressly states" that a doctor should not treat their child, the GP can if they deem the teen mature enough.

Opposition education spokesman Nick Wakeling rightly said parents should be included in any decision affecting their child at school.

"Parental rights and responsibility over the health and wellbeing of their child must not be ignored or dismissed," Mr Wakeling said.

A battle for young minds

"This program will be a cause of concern to parents who do not wish their children to be subject to medical treatment without their consent." said FamilyVoice Victoria state director Peter Stevens.

"What information will these doctors give to students if, for example, they are confused about his or her sexual identity? Will the doctor supply the child with inappropriate material or pro-LGBT resources from Safe Schools and Minus 18 like 'OMG I'm Queer'?

"Or what about recent concerns about girls as young as 12 being handed contraceptive pills in school? It is not proper that sexual health services be provided by a GP to an underage child without parental knowledge.

"If a child needs any medical treatment, it should be up to the parent's or carer's discretion – not a doctor's – to assess the issue, if any, and bring them to the appropriate professionals of their own choosing if required."

The program is expected to enter 20 schools at the start of term one in late February. Doctors will be placed in another 40 schools from term three, with the final 40 on board by 2018. The government plans to spend $48 million on consultation rooms and staff for the program.

'Neutral' ADF join Mardi Gras

The Australian Defence Force supplied its troops with rainbow coloured 'Army Pride' lapel pins and encouraged them to march in uniform at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on March 4.

"According to Army regulations, the 'Rising Sun' badge is not to be 'redrawn, recoloured, renamed, modified, cropped, rotated, manipulated or altered in any way… or used as part of a new logo,'" said FamilyVoice National Director Ashley Saunders.

"ADF personnel marching in uniform at this event contravenes the military's standing orders of being politically neutral, and it insults those who fought, bled and died for the freedom that we enjoy in this country. The Rising Sun badge represents sacrifice, not politics.

"If someone asked to place a Christian symbol on the Rising Sun badge, the ADF would have refused, no doubt," Mr Saunders pointedly concluded.

Pokies operator plays down gambling harms

The CEO of Federal Group has obscured the negative effects of gambling in Tasmania.

On the first day of a parliamentary inquiry into future gaming in Tasmania, chief executive Greg Farrell said that problem gamblers in Tasmania only represented 0.5 per cent of the population; below the national average.

Mr Farrell's claim that people used the gaming machines for recreation without thinking they would win anything was refuted by committee member Bass Greens MHA Andrea Dawkins. She also said that there are 2000 identified problem gamblers, but the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission reports there are many more people considered at risk of forming an addiction.

FamilyVoice Tasmania State Director Jim Collins said, "We can't continue to profit from large scale human misery.

"As the inquiry heard, over 20,000 people are caught in this destructive cycle of addiction, with a painful cost for their families. Some are unable to afford to eat or clothe their kids because all their cash is feeding pokies that fuel our state coffers.

"As one gambling counsellor said pokies revenues are 'ethically disgusting'. Public pressure for reform is now huge - and unites a range of political positions. Opinion polling shows that 84% of Tasmanians support actions to remove poker machines from the state's pubs and clubs.

"The community cost of gambling outweighs any possible benefits. Tasmania should lead the nation with positive reform."

The latest figures show Tasmanian gamblers lost around $113 million on poker machines alone last financial year. Given that about 40 per cent of the population does not gamble at all, that burden is especially concentrated. About 2.4 per cent of the state's population accounts for 20 per cent of gambling revenue.

Crumbling support for injecting room

Both major parties have initially rejected a supervised heroin injection room proposal for North Richmond, despite support from Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the state coroner.



The Sydney injecting room trial actually saved less than six lives according to Rachel Carling-Jenkins MP

Victorian Mental Health Minister Martin Foley said he has no plans to set up a supervised injecting room but the government is open to a parliamentary inquiry into the issue.

Malcolm Turnbull told 3AW on February 24 that the Sydney facility in his former electorate has "been more successful, than not."

In a February 22 speech on the private member's bill proposing an 18-month trial, social scientist Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins MP (CDP) tore apart the positive spin from the Sydney trial, based on a key 2010 KPMG report.

In 2009-2010, "less than 1 per cent of all visits to the [Sydney] injecting centre resulted in a referral of any kind," Dr Carling-Jenkins said.

"The comparatively lower rate of decline in ambulance call-outs in the Darlinghurst-Surry Hills area may well reflect a displacement effect of injecting drug use from Kings Cross due... to the sniffer dog program."

Given the lack of data on City of Sydney syringe bins, Carling-Jenkins proposed that a possible increase in deposits in those bins "may explain the decrease in the number of needles and syringes collected in public areas."

She calculated that the overdose rate for clients before registering at the injecting centre was 0.0228%, but the overdose rate from 604,022 injections over the trial period was 0.567%, a 24-fold increase. In the trial's final year, the clients' overdose rate of 1.5% was a 64-fold increase on the rate before using the centre.

"If clients at the injecting centre had the same rate of overdoses at the centre that they do when they do not use the centre, there would only have been 137 overdoses instead of 3427," Dr Carling-Jenkins said.

"Applying a mortality ratio of 4 per cent [as per National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre data], this means the injecting centre could be, at best, attributed in preventing a net of 5.48 deaths in nine years."

FamilyVoice State Director Peter Stevens is shocked the injecting room is even being considered.

"In Victoria, drug addiction and distribution is out of control," Mr Stevens said.

"In North Richmond alone, 70,000 needles are distributed free to drug addicts every month. This represents a huge tragedy, and destruction of human lives, that is rarely appreciated.

"Sex Party leader Fiona Patten has proposed that the state government funds an injecting centre there, risking a tax-payer funded boost to drug use, and a flow on of profits for dealers.

"Ms Patten should listen to an objective assessment."

New euthanasia push expected

Labor and Greens MPs aim to legalise voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide in Tasmania through a private member's bill later this year.



The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2016, led by former Labor Premier Lara Giddings and Greens Leader Cassy O'Connor, first debuted in the House of Assembly in November 2016. This is the third "dying with dignity" bill to be introduced to the Tasmanian Parliament since 2009.

FamilyVoice's Tasmanian branch is preparing a comprehensive response to this proposed bill, detailing its harmful implications for both patients and their families.

"Local strategies are being developed in preparation to help MPs fully understand the implications and reject this latest bid to legalise medical killing," said FamilyVoice Tasmania Director Jim Collins.

A similar bill called the "Dying with Dignity Bill 2013", which was co-sponsored by both Ms Giddings and former Greens leader Nick McKim, was narrowly defeated thanks to the Liberal opposition voting against the reform.

Writing in a November 2016 press release following the tabling of the new bill, Ms O'Connor hinted that the Bill would be tabled for debate sometime this year.

Further information as to when exactly this new bill will resurface and how Tasmanians can respond to it will be published in a later edition of VoxLink, so stay tuned.

Jim Collins to speak at Easter family camp

FamilyVoice Tasmania Director and National Development Officer Jim Collins will be the keynote speaker at a new Easter family festival being held at Camp Clayton on the northwest coast from 14-17 April.

Mr Collins will be speaking alongside the Director of the Centre for Biblical Preaching Mike Raiter and others. Worship will be led by the Aussie psalmist music band Sons of Korah.

"It's a privilege to be part of this new Easter festival. As Christians gather from across Tassie to celebrate the joy of Jesus' resurrection, we'll also be looking together at how our Risen King helps form a whole of life discipleship. Join us if you can!" said Mr Collins.

More details and registration information at: www.campclayton.org.au/easterfestival.html

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Editorial

Conservative revolution or tipping point?

The national political landscape was upset this year after South Australian Senator Cory Bernardi's resignation from the Liberal party on February 9, the culmination of years of deep disquietude with the direction of the federal Liberal party.

Bernardi expressed his disenchantment with the Liberals back in a November 2016 blog post in which he said: "It is not and has never been the Liberal Party's job to pursue the 'regressive' Left agenda. … Political parties, if they are to survive, need to have a strong base of principled conviction that shapes and frames policy development. They don't drift along wondering where the tide of public opinion will take them. Instead, they take up the oars with intent and try to convince others to join them on the journey."

The Australian Conseratives party is not innately Christian, but many of its principles show a deep respect for Christian values.

Bernardi wrote in his 2013 book *The Conservative Revolution*: "The framework of our Western moral tradition can be found in the wisdom of the Ten Commandments and in the lessons of Christ and the life of the Apostles. Thus, secular or not, our society is based on the principles of religious faith, borne of the natural law that is engraved on our very heart, reflected in our customs and codified in our laws."

Bernardi is a strong supporter of traditional man-woman marriage. During a September 2012 debate with Labor Senator Penny Wong, he described the push for same-sex "marriage" as coming from "radicals" who were determined to destroy the social fabric of Australian society. He questioned where the militant campaign would lead, if society was prepared to redefine marriage based on the "latest criterion" that it should be allowed irrespective of gender.

Cory Bernardi has been a very vocal and unwavering opponent of the so-called "Safe Schools" gender ideology program. His outspoken stance on the issue ultimately lead to his office being invaded, trashed and defaced by an angry group of less-than-tolerant pro-LGBT students.

In *The Conservative Revolution*, Bernardi raises concerns about non-traditional families, surrogacy, abortion and euthanasia and calls on fellow conservatives to help to reverse the trends in social acceptance of changing attitudes that has helped usher us into a "morbid new world" by using sanity and reason. He wrote that it is "horrendous and unacceptable" that the abortion "death industry despatches 80,000 to 100,000 unborn children [in Australia] every year." He also believes that life begins at conception.

Being the arch enemy of the Australian Greens and what he calls their "regressive leftist agenda," he decries environmentalism campaigns and so-called renewable energy. He says the burqa is a "shroud of oppression" and should be banned. He also denies humans are the primary cause of climate change. He also wants to strike 'insult' and 'offend' out of Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act.

On the party website, Australian Conservatives' principles include limited government, personal responsibility, free enterprise and civil society - all hallmark facets of the centre right.

Following Bernardi's resignation, former Prime Minister Tony Abbot took the opportunity at the end of last month to launch a blistering attack on current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. He outlined a five-point plan to recover the Liberal government's conservative credentials through such moves as cutting immigration, ending the renewable energy target, cutting taxes, cutting spending, and scrapping the Human Rights Commission.

Like Bernardi, Abbott wants to steer the Liberal ship towards conservative values. Whatever is in their future, they both see it as their conscientious duty to put Christian-derived conservative values back on the national agenda, and that will be good for all Australians.

Letters

Abortion sorrow

Hearing that babies are being left to die after late term abortions totally sickens me to the pit of my stomach. Babies suffer pain, unbelievably so.

Many do not believe that fetus' are not viable or feel no pain. I have experienced an abortion many years ago, advised by various medical reasons and I hated it!

It *does* have an emotional impact on a woman. Especially Christian women because they know that God knows each and every one of us before we are conceived and born. People may scoff, but I truly believe that. Read Psalm 139.

Anne Reeves
(Location withheld)

God said: "Before you were formed in your Mother's womb I knew you." No excuse to let these little souls die when so many would love to adopt them and give them the chance they deserve.

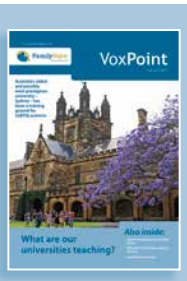
Joe Grogan
Melbourne, VIC

A national tragedy and murder whichever way you look at it. It's appalling that doctors and nurses are complicit in the destruction of these babies. One section of the profession works around the clock trying to save babies born prematurely - as early as 25 weeks - whilst other medically qualified butchers make fortunes destroying these tiny people. No government should be considering legalising the murder of the unborn at any stage of development.

(Name withheld)
Northmead, NSW

Where are you my mother, my protector, my nourishment
If I could speak I would beg that you rescue me
Hear my cry as I slowly die
Your empty arms are my broken heart
But as you turn away
Others unite to pray

Judi Walker
Wangaratta, VIC



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Free speech advocate wins court battle

Bernard Gaynor slams Anti-Discrimination Board as "political thought police"

Free speech campaigner Bernard Gaynor, a Catholic father of seven from Queensland and former military man, received a favourable judgment on February 3 in his battle with the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board and the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

"I've fought this case very hard for three years now and I think this case sets a huge precedent," Mr Gaynor told *VoxLink*.

> **"This case sets a huge precedent"**

Until the favourable ruling, Gaynor faced the prospect of appearing before what he called a "kangaroo court" and being ordered to issue a formal apology and pay fines up to $1.6 million to "anti-free speech" activist Garry Burns. Failure to do so could be considered contempt and opened the possibility of Gaynor's imprisonment.

One of the 32 complaints raised by Mr Burns related to his objection to Bernard Gaynor's blog about naked gay men exposing themselves to children at the Toronto Pride Parade in Canada. Another complaint arose from Gaynor's critique of remarks made by an Australian judge concerning incest in the context of the cultural embrace of homosexual behaviour. According to Gaynor, the ruling ends "the tyranny of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board and its serial complainants" and prevents them holding persons to account for action that occurred outside NSW.

"But, I am disappointed that the arguments on political communication and religious freedom weren't considered. The judges only ruled on jurisdiction and those battles will come another day," he said.

The key takeaway, Gaynor said, is "the Anti-Discrimination Board themselves are operating entirely outside the law. They are unconstitutional.

"They are nothing more than political thought police."

Gaynor is not confident that a formal inquiry will be conducted. But he has told his legal team to begin legal action against the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, which he believes will be successful.

"The Acting President of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board has admitted in writing that her organization has breached its own statutory obligations under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW). The Board failed to provide me with information in relation to its 'investigations' into me," Gaynor said.



Bernard Gaynor is relieved over thirty complaints were dismissed

He also hopes the NSW Police will take appropriate action against Burns for his decision to contact Islamic organizations and offer them Gaynor's personal details, including his family's home address. The subsequent caused Gaynor family members "great stress" and as a result they were forced to seek residence elsewhere for their own safety. So far, the police have declined to take any action on the basis that Gaynor was subject to anti-discrimination complaints.

Marriage inquiry fails to rule on religious freedom

Religious freedom must apply to all citizens, FamilyVoice told the Senate Committee overseeing the draft Marriage Amendment Bill

The February final report from the Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill did not affirm the right of conscientious objection for all citizens, and did not uphold freedom of religious practise for businesses and government workers.

The Committee members agreed that "under current human rights instruments and jurisprudence, there have been no decisions that oblige Australia to legislate for same-sex marriage. That said, there has been no suggestion that there are any legal impediments to doing so."

The Committee did not reach agreement on whether exemptions due to the religious freedoms of business owners and employees should be accommodated for in same-sex marriage legislation.



However, their final report cited the Institute for Civil Society's argument that aspirational religious duties are to be admired: "Persons with a strong religious or conscientious duty will act contrary to their self-interest, economic and physical security and pleasure to fulfil the duty."

Addressing the Committee on 25 January, FamilyVoice former National Director Dr David Phillips said, "Current provisions in the Marriage Act 47(a) affirm that a minister of religion can refuse to solemnise any marriage they want to. No discrimination and no need to try to justify their reasons. However, a civil celebrant does not have that freedom. The proposals in the draft give special treatment for homosexuals (surprise, surprise). 47(a) currently doesn't mention race, people under or over a certain height, those with tattoos, Christian ministers refusing to marry Muslims or Buddhist and vice versa, etc.

"Redefining marriage has nothing to do with equality and everything to do with forced conformance," he said.

Dr Phillips referred to conscientious objection in times of war as enshrined in the Defence Act, and further argued, "The bill only protects ordained Christian ministers, which is a very narrow exception. The exception, if it is to be there at all, needs to apply to every Australian citizen in every area of belief, every area of practice, every area of association and every area of family formation."

The final report ended by quoting Professor Nicholas Aroney and Dr Joel Harrison: "Religious freedom has often been treated as a second-class right, while antidiscrimination laws have been given priority… Great care needs to be taken to ensure that a focus on the first-mentioned right (freedom from discrimination) does not diminish the others (e.g. freedom of religion, association and cultural expression and practice)."