A state newsletter of

FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

VoxLink

Victoria

December 2016

Senate porn inquiry details harm

A Senate inquiry on internet porn has detailed its harms, but failed to recommend 'clean feed' internet – unlike a bill given initial approval by the Israeli parliament.

The report of the Australian inquiry by the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee was tabled on 23 November. It detailed the growing problem of children's exposure to online pornography – and porn harms, including child-on-child sex abuse. It recommended more Australian research, and advice for parents on how to keep their children safe. But although many submissions backed a clean feed internet service to block harmful websites, the report did not recommend this option.

By contrast, the Israeli bill, co-sponsored by lawmakers from across the political spectrum in late October, would require clean feed internet by default. Customers would need to contact their internet providers to have the block removed.

Libertarian groups are pressuring the Israeli government to weaken the legislation – but there is hope that the final wording will nevertheless provide greater protection for children than there is now.

FamilyVoice Tasmania director Jim Collins praised the Senate for investigating the issue.

"The evidence of porn harm, detailed in our FamilyVoice submission and those of many other groups, is a warning governments cannot ignore," he said.

"While more research is always worthwhile, I believe the time has come for action. The Israeli bill is a positive step; it is time for Australia to follow this lead and to help tackle the porn public health crisis affecting our kids."



A porn public health crisis among Australian kids

Is 'Safe Schools' founder a bully?

A photograph of 'Safe Schools' co-founder Roz Ward assaulting a male bystander has reinforced parental concerns about the supposedly anti-bullying program.



Wardenclyffe Photography

Roz Ward tries to remove a Trump supporter's hat

Ms Ward was holding copies of the Marxist newspaper *The Red Flag* while taking part in a Melbourne protest on 11 November against Donald Trump's US election win. A peaceful bystander was wearing a Trump campaign hat with the words, Make America Great Again – and Roz Ward assaulted him, trying to pull it off his head.

FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens said this kind of behaviour – bullying people with different opinions – has increased in some schools using the so-called Safe Schools program. "Many parents are relieved that the federal government will not fund these counter-productive and misleading materials next year," he said. "I urge the Victorian government to withdraw them completely from our state schools," he said.

US votes for pro-life Congress

Donald Trump won the US presidential election on 8 November, to the amazement of most media 'experts'. Even more astounding were the congressional elections that resulted in pro-life majorities in both houses.

America's new Senate and House of Representatives will begin sitting on 3 January 2017. In both houses there will be a majority of Republicans – and a majority of pro-life Republicans and Democrats. President Trump will be sworn in on 20 January. He is expected to mark the annual Washington March for Life on 27 January with a message of support.

That support will be more than mere words. Donald Trump has put Mike Pence, his pro-life, pro-family running mate, in charge of the transition team to help choose his new cabinet.

The new president will need to replace pro-life US Supreme Court judge Antonin Scalia, who sadly died in February. Barack Obama unsuccessfully nominated a judge with anti-life views.

By contrast, Donald Trump has promised to choose a judge who respects both the US Constitution and the right to life of the unborn. He has also promised to appoint future Supreme Court judges who would help overturn the 1973 Roe v Wade and Doe v Bolton decisions that legalised abortion right up to birth across the nation.



Vice President-elect Mike Pence: prolife, pro-family

New FamilyVoice national director Ashley Saunders said neither the Democrat nor the Republican presidential candidate has been free from serious character flaws. "But there is now some hope for a more pro-life, pro-family culture in the US government," he said.

Rights Commissioner meets FamilyVoice

Edward Santow, recently appointed Australian Human Rights Commissioner, paid a personal visit to the FamilyVoice national office on 9 November.



Edward Santow (centre) with Ros and David Phillips

He said he had read with interest the FamilyVoice submissions on human rights issues. He is seeking to listen to, and hopefully build bridges between, groups with differing views. He visited the Adelaide office of LGBTIQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer) activists on the same day.

National director Dr David Phillips explained the inherent injustice of federal and state anti-discrimination laws. "These laws ban unfavourable treatment of groups with various attributes," he said. "But they allow unfavourable treatment of all other groups. Complaints are 'conciliated' in private. They cost the complainant nothing, but the respondent is often advised to pay compensation even if he or she is innocent, because the cost of proving one's innocence is so great."

Research officer Ros Phillips said FamilyVoice had approached a company earlier this year for help with website development. "They refused, saying they disagreed with our values," she said. "That is their right. They have broken no law.

"But if the boot was on the other foot – if we had been a bakery like Ashers in Northern Ireland, and had refused to decorate a cake with a slogan saying 'Support gay marriage', we could be in big trouble. How fair is that?"

Dr Phillips also explained why the so-called *Marriage Equality* slogan is based on a false premise. "Marriage, ever since the beginning of human history, has been about children," he said. "Only a man-woman union has the potential to produce the next generation together – and that is the reason governments have an interest in regulating and encouraging the man-woman marriage commitment. Other couples or groups can legally establish their relationships via wills, deeds and powers of attorney. They are not unfairly treated. Marriage does not discriminate: all Australians have the right to marry if they are 18 or over, and intending to be faithful for life to a spouse of the opposite sex who is not closely related."

Mr Santow thanked FamilyVoice for their hospitality and said he had some new ideas to think about.

Tas death bill returns

Tasmanian Labor MP and former premier Lara Giddings and Greens MP Cassy O'Connor have co-sponsored the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2016 to legalise euthanasia.

The bill was introduced on 17 November and all MPs will have a conscience vote.

"This issue was thoroughly debated in the Tasmanian House of Assembly just three years ago – and defeated," said FamilyVoice Tasmania director Jim Collins. "I was delighted to see that similar legislation was also defeated in the SA House of Assembly on 17 November.

"Ms Giddings and others have pointed out that Canada now has legal euthanasia. Yet we are already seeing older Canadians, on receiving a cancer diagnosis, immediately offered euthanasia by their doctors.

"The right to die soon becomes a duty to die. The doctor-patient relationship of trust is undermined. I pray that this bill will be soundly defeated after it is debated next year," Mr Collins said.

Bad bills in the balance

Two controversial bills before the Victorian Legislative Council are awaiting a final vote as VoxLink goes to press, and another has passed.

"The Medical Treatment Planning and Decisions Bill passed on 22 November. It provides for Advanced Care Directives, but could allow euthanasia – a cause for concern," said FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens.

> **"The... [Religious Exceptions] Bill... would deny faith-based schools their right to choose staff with their values."**

"Awaiting a vote is the Equal Opportunity Amendment (Religious Exceptions) Bill – which would deny faith-based schools their right to choose staff with their values. We praise God that community protests mean it is likely to be defeated."

A third bill in line for a vote is the Births Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment Bill. "This bill would allow people to change the sex on their birth certificate merely by presenting a statutory declaration and a supporting statement by a friend, saying they are a different sex," Peter Stevens said. "The bill is based on unproven gender ideology. It has no place in our laws."

He is also concerned about Labor's move to partner with doctors in 100 state schools from February 2017. "The government is about to build consultation rooms. It will facilitate fertility advice for children as young as 12 without parental knowledge, let alone their permission," Mr Stevens said. "Parents are the primary carers of their children. They need to know details of all drugs and treatments their kids receive.

"Parents, not the government, have to pick up the pieces when things go wrong. We call on the Premier not to proceed with this potentially dangerous move."

PUBLISHER:

FamilyVoice Australia
GPO Box 9894, Melbourne VIC 3001
phone: 1300 365 965 fax: 08 8223 5850
email: office@fava.org.au www.fava.org.au

PUBLISHED:

March, June, September, December

EDITORS:

Dr David and Mrs Roslyn Phillips

PRINTER:

Openbook Howden, St Marys SA 5042

EXTRACTS:

Articles or extracts from VoxLink may be used for other publications, provided that the reprir includes the following notice:
"Reprinted from VoxLink by permission of FamilyVoice Australia, www.fava.org.au."

Editorial

How did US opinion polls get it so wrong?

US opinion polls predicted that Hillary Clinton would be elected US president, possibly by a landslide, on 8 November 2016.

But they were wrong – very wrong. Billionaire businessman Donald Trump won more votes than Hillary Clinton in 30 of the 50 US states. He won an expected 306 electoral college votes: she gained only 232.

The mainstream media wrote off Trump as an unelectable, egotistical bigot. They failed to note his secret weapon – running mate and now US Vice President-elect, Mike Pence. Pence's name was linked with Trump on placards at every campaign rally. Pence stood at Trump's side on every major podium. Donald Trump has chosen Mike Pence to lead his transition team in the lead-up to the presidential inauguration on 20 January – a key role.

Mike Pence is the opposite of Donald Trump in many ways. The former congressman and Governor of Indiana speaks quietly and rationally. He is widely respected for his political wisdom and experience, and his careful management of Indiana's finances. In a YouTube video that went viral on 4 November, Mike Pence said he is "a Christian, a Conservative and a Republican – in that order".

The morning after the US election, Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce told journalists he had just phoned the US to congratulate the man behind Trump's unexpected victory: Mike Pence. Mr Joyce said voters were attracted to Pence's Christian values.

But what about those flawed opinion polls? Former Australian PM Tony Abbott says one reason the polls were so wrong is that "people aren't always upfront with the pollsters". After seeing the abuse poured on those who are not "politically correct", many people don't want to say what they really think (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/11/16).

There is a message here for those who have ears to hear. Opinion polls claim that up to 70% of Australians support same-sex "marriage". But since the media vilify anyone who says marriage should remain man-woman, many people who hold this view are reluctant to reveal it.

Labor and others voted against the Turnbull government's plebiscite bill last month. Their real reason may have been fear – that in the privacy of the polling booth, a majority of Australians could vote to keep our Marriage Act the way it is.

Letters

'Discrimination' once was good

It used to be good to be discriminating and discerning – but now "discrimination" is used as a sledge hammer to enforce a wide range of social and political policies that many people don't support.

Now Airbnb – the popular homestay network – is forcing "non-discrimination" on customers as well as hosts.

And in Victoria, the radical Safe Schools Coalition and Building Respectful Relationships programs will be mandatory for all state schools from Prep to Year 12 from next year!

Jenny Stokes
Melbourne, Vic

Gender confusion

Like many others, I am concerned that the Victorian government wants to allow people to change the sex on their birth certificates without any valid evidence that they have really changed their "gender".

The bill would confuse young people by encouraging them to believe that their sex is whatever they feel like on any particular day – an ideology that has no scientific basis.

Sweden is one of the most transgender-friendly nations in the world, but even there, transgenders who have undergone reassignment surgery later commit suicide at nearly 20 times the rate for other people.

Gender dysphoria is a real concern, and those experiencing it need our care, help and sensitivity – but their confusion should not be reinforced by law.

Brad Rumble
Hughesdale, Vic

Building Respectful Relationships

It would be a good idea if the developers of the "Building Respectful Relationships" curriculum respected a few facts.

One is that domestic violence is not confined to abuse perpetrated by men against women. As we have been tragically reminded in recent times, women are sometimes the abusers. Statistics show that mothers are actually more likely to neglect, abuse or even murder children in their care than the child's father.

Another fact is that the safest family type – for men, women and children – is the traditional two-married-natural-parent family. Domestic arrangements where a mother lives with her child and her new boyfriend are the most dangerous of all.

Will the "Building Respectful Relationships" program promote marriage as one way to prevent domestic violence? Will pigs fly?

Lindsay Dent
Campbelltown, SA

US election

Feelings and fears are running high since the election of Donald Trump as US President-elect, in Australia as well as his own country, and no less among Christians.

But we just don't know how the challenges and pressures of office will affect this man, who like us all is sinful, fallible and in need of forgiveness.

I'd rather wait and see and pray for Donald Trump – that God will work out his purposes in and through him, just as we pray for our own Australian leaders whether we admire them or not.

In doing so, we are obeying the Bible's injunction to pray "for kings and all in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness ..." (1 Timothy 2: 2).

Lesley Hicks
Chatswood, NSW



- Passing on the baton
- Haters, rocks and Bill Shorten
- Plebiscite block allows more time

+FavaOrgAu /familyvoiceaustralia

I would like to subscribe to *FamilyVoice* publications ($64 per year). Please find enclosed cheque or debit my credit card:

Mastercard Visa

Expiry /

Cardholder:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

P/code:

Phone:

Email:

Please return to: **FamilyVoice Australia**
GPO Box 9894, Melbourne VIC 3001

Who is Ashley Saunders?

The new national director of FamilyVoice Australia was not your average child – he loved reading Hansard!

By the age of ten, Ashley Saunders was an avid reader of federal parliament's Hansard – the pritned record of all debates. By then he had already settled on his life ambitions: to be a father, a lawyer and a politician.

Youngest candidate

So it was, at the age of 20, he became Australia's youngest candidate for a seat in federal parliament. *The Australian* newspaper ran a feature article under the heading: *Old Hat? Not on the Hustings* – noting Ashley's remarkably young age to have formed an interest in politics.

His candidacy was all the more extraordinary since, to Ashley's knowledge, no one from either side of his family going back many generations had ever finished high school, and there had never been any active political involvement.

> **"My life has been shaped by the Good News of Jesus Christ, and by the gospel values of service and hospitality."**

"We didn't have a television, and I'd never met a lawyer," he says. "But even at that tender age, I sensed that this was something of a direction for my life."

Christian home

There was never much money in the Saunders family home, but there was faith, hope and love.

"My life has been shaped by the Good News of Jesus Christ, and by the gospel values of service and hospitality – values I learned as part of a family of six living in a one-bedroom home," Ashley says.

His father Fred was the Australian Secretary of Merchant Navy Christian Fellowship, a ministry that extended hospitality to Christian seamen.

"We only had six chairs in the house, and a small eat-in kitchen," Ashley recalls. "But that didn't stop us having sailors or missionaries home for a meal.

"We'd move the table into the living room that served as Mum and Dad's bedroom, and the children would sit along the edge of the bed so that the adults could sit on chairs to eat their meals. Then, when I was eight years old, Mum and Dad prayerfully agonised over their decision to borrow what was for them the enormous sum of $6,000 to extend the house."

They added two bedrooms and a sunroom – and a bathroom, which the children thought was really special. Before then they had used a bath in a corner of the laundry. The sunroom soon became a bedroom for a young girl whom the Saunders adopted.

Law practice

Ashley was offered a place to study law at the University of Sydney after he completed high school, but was unable to accept because his parents could not financially support him. He thought he would not be able to achieve his ambition.

"But I was then offered employment as a law clerk by the solicitor of a friend of a family friend," Ashley says.

"I started with that firm as an enthusiastic 17-year-old, studied law by correspondence, was asked to stay on as a solicitor, and then invited to buy into the practice."

Father and Alderman

In the meantime, he also welcomed the first of his four children into the world – fulfilling another of his life ambitions.

At the age of 26, Ashley was elected as an Alderman of Newcastle City Council, and was later re-elected for a second term. He became involved with politics at an organisational level.

Pastoral ministry

He also became an active lay preacher, mentored by Milton Morris, the long-serving NSW Minister for Transport – known for his committed Christian faith, and a strong supporter of the Australian Festival of Light as FamilyVoice Australia was then known. Later, after relocating to Port Macquarie on the state's mid north coast, Ashley began preaching regularly at churches in the region.

He also commenced theological studies by correspondence – repeating the pattern by which he had studied law many years earlier.

Then, at the age of 40, Ashley and his family moved to Sydney to complete his theological studies on a full-time basis. He accepted an invitation to join the pastoral team of a local Baptist Church.



Ashley and Lindsay Saunders

Call to leave law

Many people he knew found his decision to leave his successful law practice hard to understand, but Ashley believes it made perfect sense.

"I was clearly led into law and I was clearly led out of it," he says. "What's more, my motivation was the same: to serve the Lord by serving people in whatever ways He chooses."

Call to FamilyVoice

That brings us to the further crossroads where Ashley found himself earlier this year, after serving as Senior Pastor of a Queensland Baptist Church for over seven years. Reflecting on that journey, Ashley muses, "Lindsay and I sensed that my ministry with the Church was coming to an end. Then, as I was prayerfully considering what the Lord would have me do in the next chapter of my life, the possibility of serving with FamilyVoice Australia came across my desk.

Family, faith and freedom

"As I prepare to step into this new challenge, I am extremely conscious of our nation's vital need for a Christian voice in the civic arena for family, faith and freedom.

"To borrow from the Apostle Paul, our nation desperately needs the enduring qualities of faith, hope and love – the godly, selfless and true kind of love taught and modelled by our Lord Jesus Christ."