

**Melbourne Anglican Diocese Social Responsibilities Committee Background Documents to Motions  
on Violence against Women, End of Life Choices, and Equal Educational Opportunities**

**October 2015 Report for Synod Members**

**ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE SUBMISSION**

**TO THE VICTORIAN ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Formal responses to family violence have generally been reactive rather than proactive. Significant time and money is spent dealing with the consequences of violence. Shifting the emphasis to stopping violence before it occurs (primary prevention) addresses the identified root causes of family violence to prevent incidents from occurring in the first place. The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne strongly believe the Victorian government must, along with early intervention and tertiary responses, continue to invest in long term and strategic commitment to prevention that includes primary prevention measures. It is not enough to step in once the damage is done. Without a clear commitment and investment in policies and programs focused on intervening before violence occurs, personal and financial costs will continue to grow leading to increased tertiary sector expenditure. Our submission describes a practical primary prevention approach, aimed at educating and building capacity for change in the Church that may have relevance as a model for the wider community.

As well, this submission will summarise a number of best practices. We make a number of recommendations that give priority to progressing primary prevention responses to tackle family violence: 1. There should be a dedicated approach and resourcing to primary prevention strategies. 2. That current resourcing/funding of primary prevention efforts associated with health promotion and education be enhanced, recognising current underinvestment in this area. 3. Faith communities and associated welfare agencies are important and appropriate entities to assist in primary prevention and should be resourced accordingly. 4. That educational institutions - State, Independent Schools, Registered Training Organisations and Tertiary Institutions - deliver Respectful Relationships education targeted at all levels of education, i.e. from pre-school to tertiary.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Ethos, which acts as Executive for the SRC, is organising A Civil Conversation on Homosexuality & Same-Sex Marriage. On 21/11, 1-6 p.m. at St. Thomas' Burwood. Register at [www.ethos.org.au](http://www.ethos.org.au).

## **Inquiry into End of Life Choices**

### **VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

#### **(Legislation and References)**

Submission on behalf of the Social Responsibilities Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne  
Prepared by Dr. Denise Cooper

#### **Executive Summary**

- The distinction drawn by medicine and the law between euthanasia and 'letting die' by withdrawal or withholding of treatment, even in the case of life prolonging treatments, should be maintained.
- Advance Care Planning should place less emphasis on rigidly enforceable Advance Care Directives and adopt a broader approach that emphasises the careful appointment of a medical substitute decision maker and that encourages the patient to identify and discuss their values and beliefs with that decision maker, family, friends, and their health care team.
- Victorian law should clarify that doctors may use medically accepted, appropriate and effective pain relief at the end of life without fearing prosecution, if their intention is clearly to relieve pain and not to end life. All medical practitioners should be adequately trained in the administration of pain relief at the end of life.
- Patients should not be forced, by inadequate palliative care, into seeking death as an escape from treatable pain and other suffering. End of life care, education and research require additional funding so that people do not die badly due to lack of palliative services.
- Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide (PAS) should remain legally prohibited. Respect for human life is not just a religious value, but a foundational value of all societies in which reasonable people would want to live. The life of each individual has an equal claim to respect, because SUBMISSION 555 the value and dignity of each person is not diminished by age, disease, dependence or disability. The two major arguments for permitting euthanasia, used separately or together, are the argument from the principle of respect for patient autonomy and the argument based on the obligation to relieve suffering where possible. Both arguments are flawed.
- Euthanasia cannot and will not be limited to competent patients or to the terminally ill, or even the physically ill. The moral logic of the two justifications for euthanasia demands the extension of the practice both beyond those who are able to decide for themselves and beyond those who are suffering. The extension of both practices is seen clearly in the changes to the law and practice in jurisdictions where euthanasia and PAS have already been legalised.
- The euphemism 'assisted dying' aims to mask the fact that euthanasia and PAS are actually forms of suicide. Legalising euthanasia and PAS will send mixed messages about suicide prevention. To approve suicide for some but not others is inherently discriminatory, and indicates that some lives are considered of more value than others.

## Draft Interim Report to Synod 2015 on 'Educational Opportunities for All Australians'

2015 Synod Motion: That the Synod receive this interim report on the 2013 motion moved by Dr Stephen Ames concerning 'equal educational opportunities for all Australian children and young people and ways the Diocese can help support the promotion of this value'. Synod asks the SRC to prepare a final report for the Synod in 2016. Moved Dr Gordon Preece, Seconded Rev'd David Peake.

The SRC has agreed on the process for addressing this task.

1. Identify what makes for more equal educational opportunities being available to students wherever they are in Melbourne, Victoria and Australia, whether indigenous communities, rural, urban and suburban Australia, or whatever their socio-economic circumstances.
2. Inquire of a range of experienced educators regarding whether such opportunities were available
  - a. what is their understanding of what makes for good educational opportunities?
  - b. are unequal educational opportunities indeed a serious issue for Australia as a nation?
  - c. what way of 'measuring' of educational inequality did they use?
  - d. are there nations with improved 'equal educational opportunities' from whom we can learn?
  - e. what needs to be done to decrease the levels of inequality in Australian education
3. Preliminary SRC understanding of good educational opportunities to be tested & refined for 2016
  - a. The basic understanding of education:
    - \*If available to use the Anglican Church's biblically grounded theology of education.
    - \*Cultural understandings of Education. Two contrasting examples:
      - i. education is the whole community handing on a worthy heritage to the next generation for their good and their participation in the life of the nation for the common national and global good as this emerges over time;
      - ii. education is a commodity aligned to thriving in a national & global economic framework
  - b. The quality of the relationship between students and teachers & the formation of the latter.
  - c. A robust and representative curriculum.
  - d. Schools with a culture & resources supporting good educational opportunities for diverse student capacities & interests – academic & vocational; sciences & arts, Christian & other religions
  - e. Schools that are well supported by their local communities.
  - f. Engaging young people radically disengaged from the school system.
  - g. Engaging Indigenous students and their communities .
  - h. Students' prospects and hopes for work are well supported by public and private sectors.
  - i. A well resourced educational system promoting equal educational opportunities for all students
4. Realistically, the Diocese may or may not be able to do much to promote the many aspects that make for good educational opportunities and the SRC may only be resourced to engage the Diocese on some aspects Yet God has equipped us over a long time with Anglican Schools, parishes and professionally involved laity, with considerable educational experience and expertise. Hence we do not lack the educational clout or resources for these matters.

What comes to light from (1)-(3) we will report on and what across the Diocese is being done to increase equal educational opportunities and how these could be enhanced.

### What has been done so far?

We have a sub-committee discussing these issues and have engaged experts including National Curriculum Chair Prof. Barry McGaw, former Melbourne & Trinity Grammar Principal Rick Tudor and Dr Sally Burt to respond to the above questions so we can complete our report for the 2016 Synod.

