

The Coalition for the Defence of Human Life



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Newsletter

March

2018

2018 Rally for Life: Save the Date!

Preparations are well underway for this year's Rally for Life. As many of you would be aware, May 2018 marks twenty sad years since abortion was made legal in Western Australia. In order to appropriately commemorate this event, and especially all the innocent lives lost under this legislation, the Coalition for the Defence of Human Life is organising a particularly special gathering.

Instead of the normal venue on the steps of Parliament House, this year's event will take place in the Supreme Court Gardens in the evening of Saturday, May 26. The particular focus of this gathering will be to remember the thousands of lives lost in this state to abortion, as well as acknowledging the deep pain which has been caused to so many people directly and indirectly involved.

We invite all of our supporters to attend this event, and to encourage you to extend this invitation to all your friends, family members and church communities. More promotional resources will be available soon.

Another way we will commemorate our children lost to abortion will be a large public commemorative

2018 Rally for Life: Key Details

Commemorative Display

Date: *Friday 25th-Sunday 27th May*

Location: *Supreme Court Gardens*

Memorial Service

Date: *Saturday 26th May*

Time: *BYO picnic dinner from 5pm*

Main service 6:30pm-8pm

Location: *Supreme Court Gardens*

All welcome

display of crosses. This will also be located in the Supreme Court Gardens from Friday May 25 to Sunday May 27. The intention of this display is to bring greater awareness to the sheer scale of the tragedy of abortion in this state.



Some of the 1500+ attendees at last year's Rally for Life. Can we increase the numbers again this year?

Born Alive and Left to Die: Where are we now?

In November last year, a petition with over 7000 signatures calling attention to the issue of babies born alive after an attempted abortion was presented to Parliament on behalf of the Coalition for the Defence of Human Life.

Since 1999, at least 27 babies have been born in our state as a result of abortion, only to die without receiving proper medical care, the Department of Child Protection being informed, or the Coroner making any investigations.



The petition called for a Parliamentary Inquiry to investigate this issue, and establish appropriate protocols and procedures to ensure that no more infants die needlessly in Western Australia.

The petition was received by the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, however, at the time of writing, no decision has been made by this committee regarding which, if any, action will be taken.

CDHL Special Appeal: Help make the Rally for Life Happen!

The Coalition for the Defence of Human Life runs completely on donations from generous individuals and member organisations. Without the support of people like yourselves, we can not host the Rally for Life, or continue to engage in any of our other activities.

With the Rally for Life approaching soon, would you please consider an ongoing or one-off donation towards the works of the CDHL? Every donation is gratefully received and will contribute towards important pro-life initiatives in our state.

So where do all the donations go? Here are some of our recent and ongoing activities...

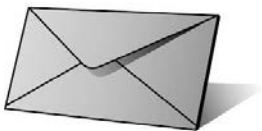
Organising the annual Rally for Life, including covering significant expenses such as venue hire, promotional costs, insurance and hire of PA equipment



Sponsoring international and interstate speakers to visit Perth to give informative talks and seminars to hundreds of people, as well as workshops to support key leaders in the pro-life movement.



Maintaining a **Facebook page** which brings the pro-life message to up to 4000 people every week



Investing in the future of the pro-life movement by financially and practically supporting new branches of the LifeChoice movement in Perth (see below)

Mailing a quarterly newsletter to over 2000 households, Churches and other organisations – completely free of charge



Personally **meeting** with individual members of Parliament to discuss the issues of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide

Providing substantial **written and oral submissions** articulating the pro-life position, including for the Parliamentary Inquiry into 'End of Life Choices' and Review of the Human Reproductive Technologies Act.



Employing a part-time research and administration assistant to manage the activities of the CDHL

Thankyou to all our generous donors for your ongoing support

'LifeChoice' Movement comes to Perth!

In early February, Rebecca Gosper (Director of LifeChoice Australia) and Brendan Malone (Focus on the Family, NZ) came all the way from Sydney and Auckland respectively, to give a series of pro-life talks and workshops to young people in Perth.

Events included a full day workshop providing in-depth education on both beginning-of-life and end-of-life issues; leadership training for university students; and a 'Pro-Life Pub Night' featuring a discussion panel which drew together leaders of the pro-life movement in WA.

"The Life Choice seminar with Brendan Malone was fantastic," said one participant. "Brendan Malone's insight into both sides of the pro-life vs. pro-choice argument provided me with unshakeable confidence in the rationality of the pro-life argument. His passion for protecting life inspired me to be more active in my efforts to do the same."

Another shared: "I learned the importance of standing up for the rights and dignity of human life, no matter what stage of human development an individual is in. I can no longer convince myself that it is morally acceptable to remain silent on the matters of abortion



Brendan Malone presenting to a room full of young adults

and euthanasia while these grave wrongs continue to exist in our culture."

Following on from these events, LifeChoice is excited to announce the formation of their first branch in Perth, at the University of Notre Dame. Watch this space to see more exciting events raising awareness of pro-life issues among the younger generation!

If you would like to get involved, or are interested in bringing this movement to your university, contact Izzy via lifechoiceperth@gmail.com or check out their Facebook page, 'LifeChoice Notre Dame Fremantle'

Real Dignity, Care and Compassion in our Last Days

In response to the current Parliamentary Inquiry into 'End of Life Choices', the CDHL has been contributing considerable resources in efforts to prevent the legalisation of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide in our state.

On March 8, Dwight Randall, President of the CDHL, with the assistance of Johanna Banks, CDHL Research Officer, represented the Coalition in a public hearing before the Committee on End of Life Choices. During the hour-long hearing, Dwight and Johanna affirmed the pro-life position in response specific questions relating to various end of life issues from members of the Committee.

The CDHL also prepared an extended written submission during the first phase of the Inquiry. The following is an abridged version:

Defining the issues

The language surrounding euthanasia and assisted suicide is often vague, euphemistic and misleading as to the reality of the true nature of what is being discussed [...]

Terms such as 'dying with dignity', 'physician assisted death' and 'medical aid in dying' cause confusion between the actions of caring for people, and killing them. The Coalition affirms that all people should receive the proper medical assistance at the last stages of their life which upholds their inherent dignity. However, this is not to be confused with the homicidal acts of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide.

Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: Why not?

There are many reasons why the Coalition for the Defence of Human Life urges the Parliament of Western Australia to reject the proposition of legalising euthanasia and/or assisted suicide in our state.

Firstly, euthanasia and assisted suicide are at their core, murderous acts because they deliberately and directly cause the death of the patient. The Coalition is of the conviction that the right to life is the first and most important of all human rights, and that each and every human life has intrinsic dignity and value. There is nothing we can do, and nothing which could ever happen to us which can alter in any way the fact of us being a human person. Our dignity is found in the inherent fact of our being human, not arbitrary concepts such as 'autonomy', 'independence' or 'quality of life' which are often subjectively measured by the individual concerned and subject to great variance. People do not 'lose their dignity' in the face of death, pain, incapacity, dementia, incontinence, shame or any other such limitations and challenges. Ironically, euthanasia and assisted suicide deny true human dignity, by reducing it to a subjective concept measured by categories based on a person's current perception. As such, they are actions which can never be considered as right, just or even acceptable.

In effect, what the legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide does is create exceptions to our homicide laws, where some people are given the endorsement of the law to kill another person, or to assist them to kill themselves. If euthanasia and/or assisted suicide were to be made legal in Western Australia, we would establish a sick double standard in our society, where we have class of people deemed as 'killable', whose lives are not considered to be not worth protecting. This situation is as abhorrent, dangerous and inhuman as it sounds.

The most powerful argument used by proponents of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide, is that these practices are necessary to prevent people dying in unbearable pain. The Coalition for the Defence of Human Life most strongly agrees that we should be working to minimise pain and suffering for people in the last stages of life. However, according to medical



professionals who work most closely with dying patients, euthanasia is simply not necessary. [Recently], in an open letter to the Members of the Parliaments of Victoria and New South Wales, one hundred and five palliative care professionals refuted the "false belief" that good palliative care "cannot assist or support those with pain and suffering in a professional and ethical manner"; while recently three former presidents of the Australian Medical Association Victoria affirmed that "When it comes down to it, if you provide the right palliative care urgently, effectively and confidently, you don't have to have the sorts of deaths that proponents of this legislation are suggesting you can't avoid." The excellent standard of modern palliative care means that no-one, especially in such an affluent society such as ours, has any reason to die a painful and/or distressing death. Wherever there is great suffering at the end of life, the questions we should be asking are not along the lines of, 'how sick does a patient have to be before we kill them?', rather, we must be asking, 'how can we provide the care which is needed in this situation?'

However, experience from overseas indicates that in reality, the experience of 'unbearable' pain – or even the fear of its potential occurrence at some later stage – is not, in fact, the main reason why people seek medical assistance to end their lives. The reality is that most people who seek euthanasia, do so because they perceive they have lost their sense of dignity, or enjoyment of life. In such cases, offering to help a person die is not an appropriate response. Rather, we must give them the dignified care and support they need to live a meaningful life.

The practice of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide also has considerable negative effects for other people involved, beyond the individual concerned. In the Canadian province of Ontario, within eight months of euthanasia being legalised in that country, 54 doctors had removed their name from a list of willing providers, leaving only 137. Many of these doctors ceased to be involved in the practice because of the moral and psychological distress of killing another human being. One study examining family members or close friends who were present for the death of a loved one by assisted suicide found that 20% had full or subthreshold Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, while 16% had depression.

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Making the option of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide, by its very nature devalues the worth of human life, and especially the life of those who are sick or disabled. It imparts an implicit message to some of the most vulnerable people in society, that their life is not worth living, and that 'topping yourself off' is a rational and valid response to the situation they find themselves in. Not only that, but the medical profession will provide all the assistance that one would need. Many older, chronically ill and disabled people already struggle and have to fight hard for others to see their lives as valuable, and not just a 'burden' on society. Euthanasia and/or assisted suicide will entrench these discriminatory and dehumanising attitudes towards the

elderly, sick and disabled in our society, and open the door to increases in all forms of abuse towards such people. Because of implicit or explicit pressure from others, the 'right to die' will become for many people a 'duty to die': a duty to cease being a burden and drain on society's resources, a duty to get out of the way so that others can get on with their lives, to choose death rather than proper medical treatment. Concerningly, almost half of all people who died by assisted suicide in the US state of Oregon last year, cited 'being a burden on family, friends, and/or caregivers' as a reason which made them want to end their life.

In addition, there is evidence that the practice of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide actually increases the overall suicide rate. In Oregon, which legalised assisted suicide in the late 1990s, the suicide rate is now 41% higher than the national average. This is not surprising, as the practice of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide sends the message that suicide is an appropriate and acceptable response to suffering, and normalises this most tragic of actions. We are already investing many resources towards lowering the suicide rate, because of the trauma and disastrous societal consequences it causes. Let us not undermine these most important and commendable of efforts, which keep the very fabric of our community intact.

Providing Truly Compassionate Options

If a person is opposed to euthanasia and/or assisted suicide, it is unfair and unjust to accuse them of 'not caring if people die undignified death'. Rather, is it out of compassion and a deep respect for the dignity of the individual, that those who are most opposed to euthanasia and/or assisted suicide are also among the most vocal advocates for making gold-standard palliative care available to everyone.

If all people knew of the services which are available, and had the means to access them, there would be few if any calls for the legalisation of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide. Yes, this standard of palliative care does come at a significant financial cost. However, it must be considered as a priority by the government, as it is a necessary service if all people are to navigate the last days of life in a way which is truly dignified. Of much greater human cost to our society would be the effects of passing laws which would see euthanasia and/or assisted suicide legalised in our state.

Pregnancy Problem House is excited to venture into the online auction world. Join us in raising funds for our cause by bidding on the beautiful artworks donated to us by talented artists.

Go to: www.32auctions.com/PPHArt

Artworks will be released for bidding periodically from 9am 23rd February to Midday 7th April.

If you would like to donate a piece of artwork to raise funds for your local centre please call Alissa on 9200 7040 by 22nd February.

COMMUNITY NIGHT
& Outdoor Movie
 Friday 6th April, 2018
 St Columba's Primary School,
 30 York St, South Perth

Movie: WONDER (rated PG)

Food and socialising from 5pm,
 movie to start from 7pm
 Tickets \$10 online or \$15 at the event.

See the Pregnancy Assistance Facebook page for details