

Letters to the Sydney Morning Herald Editor in response to the Sydney Morning Herald article “Catholic church mobilises against NSW assisted dying laws” published 20 August 2017

Letter to SMH from DWD NSW President published – [click for online version](#)

Once again we see the church attempting to impose its theological beliefs on all Australians.

Our MPs need not fear such campaigns. Two opinion polls conducted in four marginal seats in Victoria demonstrate that support remains strong, in spite of extensive campaigning by Right to Life and the Catholic Church. One of these polls found that 51 per cent said they would be more likely to vote for their MP if they supported the proposed Victorian law, while only 6 per cent would be less likely.

Numerous earlier opinion polls, conducted nationally and state by state, have shown that the vast majority of Australians including Catholics, Protestants and Anglicans support assisted-dying laws. Ruling for the majority of Australians is the right thing to do, and is electorally safe.

Dr Sarah Edelman
President, Dying with Dignity NSW
Surry Hills

Letter to SMH from Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia

The Editor SMH,

The question should be asked. Bishop Comensoli says a petition and information informing the diocese on euthanasia, is emailed to parents in more than 40 schools in the diocese, presumably using the school database. Is this a suitable use of school records, given the issue affects neither children nor their education?

The Bishop also refers to distributing a brochure produced by HOPE no euthanasia, which is regrettably long on scaremongering and short on fact.

Here we have a Catholic Bishop attempting to use his power and authority to impose his Catholic doctrine on all Australians. Views that importantly are NOT supported by 70% of Catholics according to the 2016 Australian Election Study.

Ian Wood
Spokesperson
[Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia](#)
Mittagong NSW

Letter to SMH from reader published – [click for online version](#)

I'd like to assure your readers that your article (“Archbishop backs voters to say ‘no’”, August 21, page 6) does not actually represent “ordinary” Catholics.

I say that as a good Catholic boy who flirted with entering the priesthood, still pops into the odd Sunday service and maintains strong friendships with schoolmates who are also still in the Catholic community. A few of them are even Catholic school teachers.

Surveys show Catholic Australians are the most moderate/progressive of Christian communities in Australia. Sadly, the archaic views of the church leadership aren't reflective of their congregations.

Maybe it's time the Archbishop and other so-called Church leaders practised the tolerance they espouse from the pulpit.

Maybe it's time bigotry was no longer given the coverage of being labelled "religious freedom" or "free speech". And maybe bigots like Tony Abbott should stop using their Catholicism as their excuse for attacks on the LGBTIQ community.

You've given us real Catholics a real bad name. Good men like the late Father Phil Buckley and the recently retired Bishop Pat Power advocated for the poor, the down-trodden and the vilified. If they weren't calling for better treatment of refugees, they were extending comfort to gay men and women who felt attacked by society. You know, like Jesus said they should do.

Kel Watt
Braddon

Letter to SMH from DWD NSW member

The Editor SMH

The clergy represent Catholics, and Catholicism is a voluntary religious creed. Our elected representatives have a duty to consider and represent the rights of every member of society. Grass roots Catholics who understand that their right to choose the Catholic path at the end of their lives will be respected by the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 may wish to point this out to their clergy who seem hell bent on imposing their creed on people who have exercised their right to choose differently all their lives, but whose rights seem to be (opportunistically) extinguished by a terminal diagnosis. Catholics wouldn't tolerate such interference from a different creed at the end of their lives, and rightly so. Let's respect the right of every person to bring their own feelings and beliefs to bear on the end of their lives if they find themselves in the circumstances covered by the bill.

S.Marning
Ingleburn NSW

Letter to SMH from DWD NSW Board member

I am disturbed to hear that the Catholic Church is organising opposition to NSW's voluntary assisted dying bill through parishes and schools. The Catholic hierarchy does not represent the views of most Catholics on this issue as has repeatedly been demonstrated in opinion polls that show that upwards of 70% of Christians support assisted dying. Mercy and compassion are key Christian virtues but little of that is shown by the Catholic clergy who wish terminally ill people to suffer needlessly because of some misguided notion that suffering 'enobles' us and that only God can decide when we may die. If doctors and patients have a conscientious objection to assisted dying they don't have to participate but they should allow others who do not share their views about the nobility of suffering to ask for help when suffering becomes unendurable.

Dr L.Jacka
Board member DWD NSW
Marrickville