

Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry is the first of its kind in Australia. It is an important milestone made possible by having Family First in Parliament.

- **Defeating proposals to introduce laws on religious tolerance and vilification.** You and I together as Family First were instrumental in the defeat of this proposal, which would have taken away freedom of speech and choice in church services and amongst Christian community organisations.
- **Euthanasia (Dignity in Dying Bill).** Again, your support saved the day. Hundreds of your letters encouraged some key Legislative Council Members to change their position about this issue. In Holland, where Euthanasia has been around for 10 years, 1,000 people a year are killed without their consent.
- **Statutes Amendment (Relationships) Bill.** As stated above, together with your thousands of submissions this Bill was not pursued by the Government in this term of Parliament.
- **Sex education program in SA.** This program was examined by a range of concerned professionals who identified significant problems. The program was an extreme program based on a flawed understanding of adolescent psychology and inappropriate strategies of safe promiscuous sexual behaviour. The volume of correspondence that came in from those opposing the program resulted in the Government agreeing to review and rewrite parts of the program, promising to take out the most blatant anti-Christian statements and some of the more extreme aspects relating to sexual experimentation.
- **Industrial Relations law reform in South Australia.** This was a particularly difficult and contentious bill to consider and vote on. I had to carefully weigh the competing interests of the vulnerable workers and the small business owners. In the end, I believe we struck a positive balance between these interests which I believe will support South Australian families in the future.



If you would like a copy of any speeches, please feel free to contact our Parliamentary Office on (08) 8237 9122 and speak to Rachel. You can also access Andrew's speeches and questions on our website, www.familyfirst.org.au or on the website of the South Australian Parliament, www.parliament.sa.gov.au.

If you have received this newsletter by post and have an email address to which we can send updates, please let us know.

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ANDREW EVANS

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE STATUTES AMENDMENT (RELATIONSHIPS) BILL



Andrew gave a speech stating his opinion that the effects of the Bill would be to undermine the stability of relationships, marriage and our society as a whole.

Toward the end of 2004, the Government introduced the *Statutes Amendment (Relationships) Bill* into Parliament. The stated aim of the Bill was to recognise the status of homosexual relationships and, to grant such relationships the same rights as de-facto relationships. In reality, the Bill intended to grant additional rights to homosexual relationships (as well as de-facto relationships) currently enjoyed only by married couples. As a result of the hard work of many supporters in making submissions to Parliament, the Legislative Council voted 10 votes to 7 to refer the Bill to the Social Development Committee to comprehensively assess the impact and alternatives regarding the Bill.

It was overwhelming to see the thousands of submissions that were made to the Social Development Committee regarding the Bill. The Social Development Committee released its report on 24 May 2005 with a majority of

members supporting the passage of the Bill aimed at granting homosexual (gay and lesbian) couples rights at the same level as married couples after only 3 years of cohabitation.

A slightly amended form of the Bill was again introduced into Parliament in May 2005. I advised the Parliament that such legislation would be detrimental to the family unit in our State. I argued that to recognise homosexual relationships for the purpose of abolishing discrimination was hypocritical when considering the fact that there are many non-sexual same-sex relationships which exist in our State (eg two sisters living together in a relationship of dependence).

Once again, many thanks to our many supporters who sent submissions in opposition to the Bill. As I understand it, several thousand facsimile submissions were sent to various members of Parliament. The result was that some of them had to turn their facsimile machines in utter frustration.

Notwithstanding the hard work of our many supporters, the Bill was passed in the Legislative Council with minor amendments allowing a restricted recognition of domestic co-dependent relationships. Those who voted for the Bill include: Terry Cameron (Independent), Nick Xenophon (No Pokies), Michelle Lensink, Robert Lawson and David Ridgeway (Liberal Party), Ian Gilfillan, Sandra Kanck, Kate Reynolds (Democrats) and all Labor Party members.

Having been passed in the Upper House with amendments, the Bill was required to be passed in the Lower House once again. However, amazingly as of 5:15 pm on 1 December 2005, the Bill was adjourned and subsequently lapsed as this was the last sitting day before the 2006 State election. For unknown reasons the Government chose not to proceed with the Bill. Having said that, it is most likely that the Government will reintroduce and pursue the passage of the Relationships Bill should the Labor Party be re-elected in March.

GREETINGS FROM ANDREW EVANS

Dear members and friends,

On behalf of my Parliamentary team as well as myself, I would like to once again thank you for your continued support in this challenging role.

The last twelve months have been particularly history making for the party and, I am grateful for the countless people who have supported Family First in so many different ways.

After almost four years in Parliament, it is clear that Family First is having a real impact on outcomes in Parliament and with the Government.

Warm Regards



Andrew Evans MLC OAM
Leader Family First Party SA

MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

In 2005, I supported and made a significant speech in relation to the proposed establishment of a Committee to investigate and report upon the range of assessment and treatment services for people with mental health disorders in South Australia. More than a quarter of a million people - or up to one in five South Australians - experience mental illness annually. For a range of reasons, the incidence of mental illness appears to be higher than that experienced interstate so that, although funding levels appear to be comparatively favourable with other states and territories, some have said that true comparisons are not so favourable. For these reasons, I will continue to support Government intervention in this important area of policy.

BIG BROTHER

Both Dennis Hood and I were active in the media debate during 2005 regarding the Big Brother television program airing behaviour between housemates which constituted sexual harassment together with grossly offensive language and postures. Several complaints had been made to our office relating to a particular incident on the program which they considered amounted to sexual harassment. My office sent out a media release on the matter calling on the Australian Broadcasting Authority to investigate Channel Ten's Monday night 'Big Brother Uncut' program following complaints. Dennis and I were able to speak on several radio sessions about the issue. In addition, it appears as though the issue was further taken up by other disgusted citizens. The public pressure caused Channel 10 to seek advice about what would be considered inappropriate for public viewing and, such behaviour was not aired on the show subsequently.

NALTREXONE IMPLANT SOLUTION

The increasing tendency for drug abuse in our State has been a continued concern of mine. So I was delighted when I was recently approached by Mr Paul Madden who had researched a new form of rehabilitation which utilised Naltrexone implants and, which has met with much success in Western Australia. The implants release chemicals into the body which block the sensors that respond to drugs. The implants are slow releasing and can continue for periods of up to 120 days. This negates the need for daily or weekly medication or injections. In addition, unlike Methadone which is also potentially addictive, Naltrexone is not addictive. In light of the above information, I organised a meeting with the Honourable Dean Brown, Paul Madden, and myself to explore the possible implementation strategies for this promising form of rehabilitation. Family First will be supporting the introduction of the Naltrexone implant solution in the upcoming Parliament.

FATHERS INQUIRY

I previously advised that I had proposed the establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee to investigate and report on the status of fathers in South Australia. The motion was a result of several constituents advising that they were experiencing significant difficulties in their fathering roles. This, coupled with the increasing amount of literature reporting that fathers play a unique and integral role in the psychological development of children, meant that something had to be done. The inquiry was a first of its kind in Australia and an important milestone for Family First. The motion received support from all political parties. I was grateful for the opportunity to be on the Committee. The report of the Parliamentary Select Committee was tabled in Parliament in April 2005.



Andrew with fathers group

The Committee has recommended a range of measures to improve awareness, practical expression, acknowledgment and consistency in social policy development and delivery for the support of fathers and families. Other committee recommendations concerned the positive promotion of fathers and fatherhood, the promotion of positive parenting for fathers and family-friendly and public workplace policies that better accommodate the needs of families for involvement with their fathers. The committee's recommendations also dealt with the area of need with regard to men's education, health and crises services. In my speech on the report, I implored the Government to invest resources in implementing the recommendations set out in the report.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS FOR FAMILY FIRST IN PARLIAMENT

Let me review some of the key achievements made possible by your support of me as the first Family First Member of Parliament in Australia. In each case, I have been overwhelmed at the generosity so many of you have shown each time we have requested your assistance and support. Whether it was financial help, letter writing, faxing or emailing, or simply telling others about the important work we are doing together, your assistance has been vital.

- **Removal of the 1982 cut-off date for prosecution of certain sexual offences including child sexual abuse.** I recognised the need to change the Law that prevented certain sexual offences that took place before

1982 from being prosecuted. It was a serious cause of injustice. Together with Advocates for Survivors of Child Abuse, I led the charge and received unequivocal support for passing this Bill in Parliament. The result of which has been that some abusers are now in jail and about 900 have been investigated.

- **The defeat of proposals to introduce same sex (homosexual) adoption and IVF rights.** Whilst some other States adopted these changes, Family First assisted in significant lobbying to maintain legal protection for the rights of children in this regard.
- **Establishment of an Inquiry into the Status of Fathers in South Australia.** This