



The Rev. The Hon. Fred Nile MLC ED., L.Th.,



Member of the Legislative Council
Deputy Chair, Privileges Committee
Parliamentary Leader, Christian Democratic Party
Parliament House, Macquarie Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9230 2478 Facsimile: (02) 9230 2098
Email: f.nile@parliament.nsw.gov.au

EUTHANASIA – THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF THE DEATH CREEP

Yesterday, Rev Fred Nile MLC delivered a powerful speech to the NSW Legislative Council on the topic of euthanasia, calling it yet another example of the spectre of the “death creep” that is engulfing Australia.

The speech was delivered in response to two recent article in the Australian press concerning the euthanasia push in other states. Rev Nile made it clear that the Christian Democratic Party will continue to oppose all forms of the “death creep” including euthanasia, in NSW.

The speech is extracted below from the NSW Parliamentary *Hansard*.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (24:03:01): Tonight I wish to speak on the latest euthanasia push. There seems to be a renewed push towards legalising euthanasia under the guise of legalising suicide in some States of Australia. This has come on the tail end of the recent liberalisation of abortion laws in New South Wales. The latest proposal to legalise euthanasia in Queensland represents what I call the death creep in our legislative and legal culture. No civilisation, culture or people can survive if its moral framework is not focused on life—its preservation, maintenance and promotion as a gift of almighty God. Unfortunately there are mischievous groups in our society who seem fixated on the opposite.

A recent article by Jamie Walker on doctors confronting clerics on the right to die is emblematic of this trend. The report outlines the latest push in Queensland that claims death is somehow a right that should be enshrined in law. It is ironic that just this year we passed

legislation that what is indeed alive—and yet unborn—has not been afforded the same right in law. But the article is notable for a number of reasons, none of which has anything to do with the merit of what these doctors are arguing for. What strikes me in particular is the old argument of pitting science against religion in this debate.

The question of life, what it means and when it starts were vigorously debated in this Chamber this year. In my contribution to those debates I made it very clear that while my belief is shaped by my Christian faith, science indeed supports my pro-life position as well. That pro-life position is no less relevant in the euthanasia debate as it is in other debates concerning bioethics. I will not rehash the details here because members can read the September Hansard for all the abortion debate details.

This death creep seems to be insatiable—always hungry, never satisfied. Thankfully in Western Australia, a group of doctors called Health Professionals Say No have been brave enough to take a stand in defence of the vulnerable, which is their duty as medical practitioners. The group, which numbers over 770 medical professionals, has written to all members of the Western Australian Parliament opposing the latest push to legalise euthanasia in the State. The letter warned political representatives not to be persuaded by misleading research that favoured euthanasia which is based on the Victorian State Coroner's study of just 118 cancer patients. The medical practitioners state that the Victorian research has been intentionally or recklessly misinterpreted by radical activists. These activists suggest that euthanasia laws would reduce self-harm and suicide among the terminally ill.

That is their claim, but a representative of the group, Professor Michael Quinlan, has responded that almost half of those cases in the Victorian report claimed that it was the burden of care, not the illness itself that was the issue that vexed them. It was also noted that only 14 per cent of those cases received palliative care. It is obvious to those who have taken the care to investigate the study that the real issue is the provision of palliative care to those who suffer terminal illness. Instead of directing resources to where they are needed, policy setters are choosing to allow the vulnerable to simply die by killing themselves. The Christian Democratic Party will continue to oppose these draconian, inhuman and barbaric laws. Here we have a group of doctors—men and women of science—who seem to agree with religious leaders. This debate is not a debate between people of religious persuasion and secular types. It is a debate between people who can honestly and sincerely approach this difficult question without allowing their views to be tainted by ideology or, on the other hand, people who are infatuated by the death creep.

As I noted earlier, no civilisation can survive the drive to its own self-extinction. That drive is a suicidal reflex of a people who have lost faith in a higher law. I would understand that as a divine law, but some of my colleagues might be more persuaded by interpreting that as a natural law, or a law of the universe. Either way, it indicates that there is some authority above us and we should be careful not to be so arrogant as to think that we are gods ourselves. A responsible policy of a healthy State is one that focuses on constructive reform, not destructive and lazy ways to avoid social problems. The Christian Democratic Party will continue to oppose any proposals to introduce euthanasia laws in New South Wales. I thank the House.

END

Media inquiries:

Rev. Hon. Fred Nile MLC (02) 9230 2478

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fred Nile". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.