

Voice for Values - April 30, 2017

ACL managing director Lyle Shelton interviews Hon. Matthew Guy, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Party in Victoria about Safe Schools.

Full Transcript edited for clarity. Check against delivery.

Lyle Shelton: Welcome to Voice for Values.

It's Lyle Shelton with you from the Australian Christian Lobby, thanks for your company today. Today I've got a special guest who I'll introduce in a moment. He is the Leader of the Opposition in Victoria, the Leader of the Liberal Party, Matthew Guy, and just before we bring him into the conversation, I'm going to read you something that he said, in fact it was a speech, part of a speech, that he delivered to the Victorian Liberal State Council just a few weeks ago in Melbourne on this topic of the so-called 'Safe Schools'.

Now, none of us want to see any child bullied for any reason and I know that's Mr Guy's position. It's worth noting what he said here, this is what Matthew Guy told the Victorian State Council of the Liberal Party just a few weeks ago: *"As Leader of the Liberal National Government, we will put our children's future first. Jobs prosperity and economic security, but we will also let our kids be kids. They don't need a lesson in political and gender ideology. Kids need to be taught about respect, manners and social interaction, and predominantly this come from parents, not the State Government.*

Given a choice who is best to teach your children the values of respect and tolerance; the State Government or parents?

The Liberal and National parties back parents 100 per cent of the time. And, in Daniel Andrews' Victoria, we now have Education Department officials scuttling around childcare centres, trying to identify four-year-old boys as rampant sexist, four-year-old boys being bullied by Daniel Andrews' ideological storm troopers. Can you believe this is happening? What's wrong with these people? To bully 4-year-old kids, to claim that 5 year-old needs sex education, to believe that every primary school kid needs to be taught to question their gender. As a Father of three boys age 4, 6 and 8. I think that this kind of behaviour towards children constitutes abuse. I wouldn't accept this kind of ideological rubbish for my own boys and therefore I will never accept it for another Victorian child. A government I lead will engage meaningful anti-bullying programs; ones that focus on stopping bullying, age, race, diversity sexuality, gender, whatever it is. If it's bullying, we will tackle it but we won't expose every child to radical left-wing gender theory along the way."

Matthew Guy welcome to Voice for Values.

Matthew Guy: Good day Lyle.

Lyle: Mr Guy that was some very stirring words. I'm sure our listeners would have been pleased to hear that. What led you to the conclusion that you needed to speak out like this about the so-called Safe Schools program.

Matthew Guy: The Opposition in Victoria has been voicing its concern around the Safe Schools program for a long time now, in fact about 12 months. From our point of view the program is really focused on one small aspect of the topic of bullying. It's not focused on issues such as children being bullied on weight, on gender, on ethnicity, on height, and studies show that this is what the majority of bullying occurs around. So, you have this ideological obsession with gender in Victoria when it comes to the Safe Schools program, which frankly, is misleading parents to saying that it's an anti-bullying program.

It's not an anti-bullying program. It's a program which is really focused on a super hard left wing agenda, an agenda that is quite strange when it comes to only talking about one part of bullying as opposed to what most kids experience when it comes to bullying, and, therefore, from my point of view we can get a better program to combat bullying in Victoria and that could be delivered by the Zero Bully Foundation or Alannah & Madeline Foundation and they will focus on combating bullying, not on a radical gender studies theory for 4 and 5 year old children, which is, frankly, quite ridiculous.

Lyle Shelton: Yes, this has been quite alarming for those of us who have been watching this issue for some time as you have, that we have this ideology even been taken down to 4 and 5 year olds. We have the Safe School promoted resource, The Gender Fairy, telling children that "No one can tell you if you are a boy or a girl, only you could know". This has got to be very confusing for children at such a formative age.

Matthew Guy: Children have so much thrown on them nowadays. This whole view of children that they have to be little adults. Well, I don't subscribe to that. Just let kids be kids.

They have so much thrust on them nowadays. In a modern world, the last thing you want to do is give them something else to be concerned about and that is telling every single child that they should be questioning their gender. I mean, what has this Government come to in Victoria, when they are actively telling 4 and 5 year-old children to question their gender?

You know, if there is a student or there is a child who is that old and who is questioning their gender, then sure, if they need help then we will give them with all the support they need, will give them the support of their families. As I said, I think state governments doing this kind of stuff constitutes abuse and I think it is.

Lyle Shelton: What do you think of this idea, that gender is just a social construct, disconnected from biology. How does this idea find its way into our schools? And, of course, this program is going to be compulsory in every Victorian public high school from next year. How does this ideology find its way in?

Matthew Guy: That is a very good question. How on earth has it got to a stage where in modern day Victoria and part of the Western world, that people now pitch to 5 year-old children that gender is not biological and that gender is something that you can choose.

Well, I don't know how on earth it has come to that. I mean I don't subscribe to that. I think gender is biological. I don't have any view or can choose what gender there is.

There are massive legal issues, there are massive complications around that kind of point of view when it comes to safety and security of people in change rooms, safety and security of people in toilets. I mean there are lots of issues to consider on that topic which, frankly, have never been addressed by the Government. They just proceeded along and marched on this path around this radical gender studies to go tell 5 year-old kids to question their gender, with no thought about on how it actually affects them in their immediate future, or long term future, or legal ramifications of what that might bring. And I don't know how it has got to this stage.

Lyle Shelton: That's a really good point you raised, this is one that has exercised our minds at ACL: Is there going to be a trailing liability for state governments who promote these programs? If children being led down the path, where they take irreversible action to their bodies, surgery, take puberty blockers, cross sex hormones which we know have medical side effects, could state governments be up for some sort of liability 10 or 20 years down the track?

Matthew Guy: My basic point of view in this always is that the state based education system is there to educate children. It's not there to give them more social stigmas and problems in their lives, this is of course what it could possible do. And you are right, I don't know what some of the ramifications might be.

But the reality is that the state education system of Victoria is putting education second, is putting radical genders theory first and, you know, I find it hard to believe that the Education Minister, James Merlino, who has dined out on telling everyone that he gets preferences off Christian parties, that this is the guy who removed Christian education or religious education from being taught in government schools. This is the guy who has brought into the state education system the radical Safe Schools Program; this is the guy who through elements of the Respectful Relationship program is going to subject children, as young as pre-school, to being assessed by public servants as to whether or not they have sexist tendencies, I mean to do this to a 4 year-old child is bullying.

Lyle Shelton: It's quite extraordinary.

Matthew Guy: And it's state sanctioned bullying.

Lyle Shelton: Now just hold that thought Mr Guy, we are coming up to a break.

Lyle: Mr Guy, we saw the NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes recently say that he's going to scrap the Safe Schools program in NSW when it runs out of Commonwealth money. You are actually the first leader of a major political party to express opposition to this. It's great what NSW has done but you are actually ahead of the curve there.

Matthew Guy: We were some time ago and we said that we would scrap it because we could see in Victoria where this program was going and as I said before when you have a program which is really solely focused on radical gender studies, is not focused on combating bullying around race or gender or height or weight which is what the majority of bullying in our schools is focused on, then you'd have to question why the program is there, and I suspect that the program is there to fulfil a radical left wing agenda which has captured much of the centre left parties in Australia today, and which is being forced upon everyone else's children. And I think that's why that program should be abolished.

Lyle Shelton: This is what's perplexing many of us who are watching from afar on what's going on. In Victoria, of course, the Australian Christian Lobby has a lot of supporters in that state but the government there under Daniel Andrews seems to be taking a very radical direction on a whole range of things - not just Safe Schools - but now we've actually got a government-sponsored bill being mooted for Euthanasia. We are talking about some radical policy here that is unprecedented probably in Australia's history.

Matthew Guy: I think they certainly have been taking a radical left wing agenda, there's a number of other social issues. I mean you refer to Euthanasia. Euthanasia has historically been a conscience vote in all parties. It's come to the parliament before, I voted against it, I have a principle objection to the concept of Euthanasia, I think that governments should have nothing to do with ending life. (inaudible 10.34), it is my philosophical belief and I adhere to that today. So, I won't be voting any legislation around it but just look at some of the, some of the other agendas of this government here in Victoria. The Andrews government, when it comes to anti-bullying, or supposed anti-bullying programs like Safe Schools, I just shake my head.

Lyle Shelton: You mentioned earlier to, that James Merlino, the Education Minister, he is someone who has courted the Christian constituency. I can attest to that but under his watch, scripture and schools and religious education has completely been driven out from your public schools. It is the only state now in Australia that does not have any religious instruction and he has put the Safe Schools program in its place. Will your government reinstate the opportunity for religious education for students and parents who want it if you're elected?

Matthew Guy: Absolutely. To me, there is nothing more important but to give kids a grounding in faith. I just can't accept that, you can have these transgender agendas which can somehow replace the concept of teaching children about faith or whatever it might be, particularly Christianity which has founded the modern Australia, or other

religions which give children principles. It gives them the concept of respect of beliefs structure, of family, of values. I just think it's quite disgraceful that the government see somehow, teaching of faith, teaching of belief, teaching of one's own respect and community respect is somehow wrong and should be replaced with the Safe School program, which teaches kids to question their gender instead.

So, one has to ask, what kind of government would remove the teaching of faith which teaches children about respect and tolerance, and set of values for their life and replaces that with a system of teaching them to question their own gender. That's why I think this government in Victoria is the most radical left wing government in Australian history.

Lyle Shelton: Do you think many of the Victorian population are aware of this? Is this starting to come to their attention that there is far more to this government than building roads and doing all the normal functions of a state government.

Matthew Guy: It is starting to permeate into people's mind set. The more places I go around Victoria, people are very concerned with some of the radical theories that are being forced upon them. But not just that, but this whole view that if you don't agree with the government somehow, that you are sexist or racist, or homophobic or bigoted.

You know in Australia, we're a democracy, provided you are not out there preaching hatred to other people, it is acceptable in this country; that a point of view or different point of view is to be debated and accepted. But under this government in Victoria there is no opposing point of view, you either agree with Daniel Andrews and his radical socialist theories or somehow, you're a bigot, and I think that is not how you govern a state.

Lyle Shelton: That's what is worrying many people in the Christian constituencies. You can't even have a debate. We don't expect society to necessarily agree or adopt our positions, we want to be free to put that in the public square. But these days, as you rightly said, people are labelled a bigot or a homophobe as a way of shutting up debate and we certainly need to reverse that trend.

Can I just ask you Matthew Guy, just before we go, one of the other things that the state government is doing down there is making it difficult for home schooling. I understand that there's some regulations that are coming to the Parliament and there's an opportunity to disallow those in the Upper House there, which impose conditions upon people who want to withdraw their children from the state education system for home schooling. Often people would do that because their kids are being bullied and there's a 30-day period that the government is looking to impose by regulations. Is that something that you would be willing to oppose when it comes to the Upper House as a party?

Matthew Guy: We'll certainly be looking to, unless there's some changes to do that. Principally because what you point out there, Lyle, is very important. This state

government in Victoria wants to control the raising of everyone's children. So they oppose home schooling because they can't inflict their radical Safe Schools theory upon them if you're home schooling. Therefore, you are outside the clutch of this mad socialist agenda. The only way you can do that is to find ways to penalise people for home schooling to force you back into the state government system in which they can then impart their radical theories upon your own children.

Now come the next state election in Victoria, the Labor Government and Daniel Andrews will be telling - particularly Catholic schools - they'll be saying no, we give you a guarantee that we won't force you as educators to teach Safe Schools upon your kids at Catholic schools.

Well that guarantee is one I think should be treated with great suspicion. It's my view that they will force this program upon all schools - Catholic and all non-government schools after the next election should they get back.

Lyle Shelton: Matthew Guy you have been generous with your time with Voice for Values today, we really appreciate that you coming on and speaking to our audience. Thank you so much, thank you for the strong stand that you're taking in this area.

Matthew Guy: Thanks for your time.

Lyle Shelton: Thanks very much everyone, thanks for listening, join us again for next week.

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