

1 Timothy 2:1-2

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, Godly and dignified in every way.

Vic

- **CFA:** The Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill was approved, resulting in the creation of a new organisation, 'Fire Services Victoria', and the conversion of the CFA into a volunteer-only agency. The Bill contained two distinct issues:

1) Restructuring of the fire services to create Fire Rescue Victoria: In short, the CFA will manage volunteer fire fighters and all paid fire fighters within the CFA will become part of Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), which will be expanded by at least another 450 staff and take over CFA stations in outer metropolitan areas such as Springvale, Frankston, Eltham, Geelong, Bedigo & Ballarat. (Daniel Andrews maintains that the changes are necessary to modernisation of fire services and will not impact on volunteers, but Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) said the restructure treats volunteers as 'second class citizens' by imposing extra layers of bureaucracy and warned the changes would cause a mass exodus among volunteers, and put people in danger during fire season. Critics claim that the restructure was done because volunteers cannot be unionized and do not pay Union fees, & since their presence reduces the need for career fire fighters, who do pay Union fees, more volunteers means less money for Unions, which in turn, means less Union donations for the Labor Party.

2) Presumptive Legislation: presumptive legislation for firefighters reverses the onus of proof that applies in other compensation schemes, so that compensation is granted based on generic service criteria and is ultimately much easier to claim. (Victoria was the only State in Australia not to have Presumptive Legislation in place for firefighters.) This issue had cross party support, but the restructure did not. Opponents to the legislation argued that the two parts should be separate pieces of legislation, as one does not rely on the other to operate. Several motions to separate the Bill were put up over the last two years, but were not supported by the


Government. **The core criticism** levelled at this part of the legislation is that it disadvantages volunteers by requiring them to meet additional bureaucratic burdens and a higher standard of proof than paid firefighters. Effectively, this is seen as reversing the intention of the legislation for volunteers, by putting the onus of proving qualification for compensation back onto the *volunteer* firefighters. (Only volunteer firefighters must prove they've attended enough fires to qualify as a 'firefighter' for compensation, although there is no clear definition of what constitutes enough fires, the 'advisory committee' process is only mandatory for volunteer firefighter claims and if the claim is rejected, the advisory committee is not required to tell the volunteer why their claim was rejected.)

- **Aboriginal Treaty Advancement:** \$30.4 million (over two years) has been allocated in the Victorian state budget, to help Aboriginal Victorians achieve self-determination. This includes \$12 million over two years towards the establishment and funding of the First People's Assembly and \$13.5 million towards ensuring Traditional Owners are equipped and ready for Treaty negotiations with the state of Victoria. Estimates have varied widely about how much the financial reparations in the final treaty will cost. Critics have condemned the process as divisive, punitive and excessively expensive. Supporters have welcomed the process as a moral victory, as the treaty will be the first in Australia.
- **Reporting racism:** The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission has unveiled a new initiative to use local councils to more easily gather and collate reports of racism, in order to literally map out 'problem areas' in society. (Last year, the commission received 188 racism complaints, a 70% increase from two years before.) Critics of the move say that most of the data collected will be unauthenticated and that these cases do not meet the standard of proof required in law and should not be used to make government policies. The Commission investigates & mediates non-criminal conduct. Although it cannot award compensation or make orders, the following are often part of mediated agreements used to resolve complaints.
 - an apology (verbal or written, private or public)
 - financial compensation
 - a job reinstatement or reference
 - access to a previously denied job opportunity or service
 - an agreement to change or stop behaviour
 - an agreement to amend or develop policies
 - an agreement to undertake human resources and equal opportunity training.




NSW

- **Motion on religious freedom:** Mark Latham of the One Nation Party, led a successful motion for the House to
 1. Support the basic human right of NSW workers to express, political, cultural and religious opinion in their private time, away from their place of work, without suffering employment penalties.
 2. Support Article 18 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political rights, covering the right of each citizen to have freedom of religion.



Federal

- **Australian Conservatives** leader Cory Bernardi announced plans to deregister the party, and hand his seat back to the Liberal Party because the reason for their existence had disappeared after the Liberal Party regained the centre right voters with Scott Morrison in charge. (In Bernardi's home state of SA, the Australian Conservatives won just over 16,000 first preference votes, compared with 53,000 for One Nation and 33,000 for the United Australia party.)
- **Tax Reforms:** The Coalition's \$158 billion income tax plan, which retrospectively offers tax cuts for the last financial year, passed both Houses of Parliament. (Labor, Centre Alliance and Jacqui Lambie voted with the Coalition. The Greens voted against it, One Nation abstained and Cory Bernardi was absent.) This signals a level of functionality at the federal level.



International


- **US: Erosion in LGBT acceptance drops 18% in two years (2016-2018):** The 'Accelerating Acceptance Index, (a national survey among US adults), shows that
 - 8% drop (2017-2018) + 10% drop (2016-2017) in the number of Americans between the ages of 18 and 34 who are "comfortable interacting with LGBTQ people. (63% in 2016, 53% in 2017, 45% in 2018).
 - 34% of young people said that they would be uncomfortable to find out that their doctor was LGBTQ, as opposed to 27% just one year earlier.

- 39% were not comfortable with their child receiving a lesson in school on LGBTQ history, a nearly 10 percent jump from 30% in 2017.
- 36% of young Americans indicated that they would be uncomfortable to learn that a family member identified as LGBTQ, as opposed to 29% in 2017.
- 12% less young woman, (the most drastic drop) reported 'comfort in interactions with LGBT people', dropping from 64% in 2017 to 52% in 2018. (Many commentators attributed this change to the transgender erosion of women's safe spaces & identity).

- **UK- The Royal College of General Practitioners has issued an unprecedented warning over National Health Service treatments for children with gender dysphoria, which recommend social transition, puberty blockers and 'sex change' operations.** The RCGP statement confirmed what many whistleblowers & commentators have long lamented, namely, that

- there is a lack of 'robust evidence' about the long-term effects of 'puberty blockers' that stop the body maturing, and cross-sex hormones.
- there needs to be far more research into the pros and cons of treatment, including medical intervention being compared with a 'wait and see' approach.
- health services should record what every patient's biological sex to avoid 'potentially calamitous' medical mistakes.
- family doctors are being pressured into providing transgender services that they feel ill qualified to deal with, and to prescribe cross-sex hormones even when they don't think it wise.

It is hoped that the 12 page document will help GPs have the confidence to talk openly and compassionately with patients about the differences between gender identity and biological sex, the limited evidence for the treatments available, and the fact that transitioning can be an irreversible process with lifelong implications- which in the current political atmosphere, has been immensely difficult .



Prayer Points

- That all levels of Government in Australia will be wise and compassionate in their approaches to policy.
- That God would raise up Christians to lead the Church & take part in leading the nation with truth and grace.
- That God would be gracious to turn the tide against the transgender ideology and all of its harms to children, families, individuals and sexuality.
- That Christians would be ready and willing to embrace the broken and vulnerable, even at personal cost, for the sake of Christ.

