

The AGE lies about Health Australia Party

The AGE newspaper group wins the award for the first major public lie about the Health Australia Party (HAP) in the 2018 Victorian election.

Its reporter, Tim Colebatch referred to “the anti-vaccination Health Australia” party in an article published on 12/11/18.

The HAP is NOT anti-vaccination. It strongly supports immunisation against potentially dangerous diseases such as whooping cough in infants and meningococcal meningitis, etc. Vaccination is the principal and almost exclusive method of immunisation used in Australia. HAP does not oppose its use.

What HAP does oppose is denial of parents’ rights to make informed choices about health interventions without penalty, via legislation such as No Jab No Pay (Federal) and No Jab No Play (State).

And we are not alone in questioning NJNP legislation.

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) stated in 2017 that “As paediatricians who advocate for the welfare of children, we are bound to draw attention to the enormous body of research demonstrating the benefits of childhood education before school commencement, especially in disadvantaged households. Denial of this access is a serious matter, with likely long-term adverse consequences for the healthy development of the children involved. In this context, the risk of VPDs to fully vaccinated children from children who are under-vaccinated is often exaggerated” [1].

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians said in 2015, “The RACP is a strong advocate of vaccination, vaccination programs, and other initiatives to promote high compliance rates of immunisation for vaccine-preventable diseases. However, the RACP does not support routinely denying children or their family’s access to social benefits. Denying access to these payments has the potential to entrench a child’s disadvantage.” [2].

the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties Inc [3], who state that “Liberty Victoria does not support the “No Jab, No Play” provisions as set out in the Act. Liberty prefers the “no form, no play” policy adopted in NSW. Such a policy requires registration of a child’s vaccination status before enrolment at childcare or Kindergarten facilities while still allowing for conscientious objections. The NSW provisions strike a better balance between the opposing values of promoting the public’s interests and respecting individual autonomy”. [3].

The Victorian Law Institute stated in 2015 that “Given the lack of evidence about any efficacy of ‘no jab no pay’ policies in achieving the desired outcomes expressed in the Explanatory Memorandum, the LIV has concerns that removing social security benefits is not proportionate to the legitimate aim of promoting the right to health” [4].

In other words, questioning NJNP legislation does NOT mean that a group is anti-vaccination. The HAP is not anti-vaccination. As the RACP clearly noted, the “the risk of VPDs (vaccine preventable diseases) to fully vaccinated children from children who are under-vaccinated is often exaggerated”, but the risks of denying early childhood education are proven.

Every citizen should have the right to make informed decisions about health interventions without pressure or coercion, and have the right to give informed consent before any medical procedure for themselves or their children. The HAP believes that this is a fundamental right of every Australia citizen, hence our opposition to NJNP/P legislation.

[1] Letter to the Communicable Disease Control Branch regarding South Australian Public Health (Immunisation and Childhood Care Services) Amendment Bill 2017. Signed by President Dr Sarah Dalton, 30/8/17.

[2] Senate submission 344 No Jab, No Pay - Royal Australasian College of Physicians
<http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=006ce194-7966-43c6-9a0b8e8debed1b18&subId=405114>

[3] "No Jab, No Play" Legislation Policy Paper, Victorian Council for Civil Liberties Inc
https://libertyvictoria.org.au/sites/default/files/No-jab-no-play-vic-bill-policyfinal20151113_0.pdf

[4] Senate submission 318 No Jab, No Pay - Law Institute of Victoria
<http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=10aa564b-44df-4447-b2e0-28fa4c3e7f76&subId=405011>