For God and states’ rights: Euthanasia in the Senate

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When Federal Parliament debated the *Euthanasia Laws Bill 1996* (the so-called ‘Andrews Bill’), which overturned the Northern Territory *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 1995*, many saw the crucial issue as the Northern Territory’s freedom to determine its own legislative directions autonomously. As public debate developed, at least three additional themes became prominent. The first was the moral justifiability of euthanasia: some who might otherwise have supported Territory rights came out against the bill on the grounds that euthanasia was a greater evil than denying sovereignty to Territorians, while others, opposed to euthanasia, nevertheless supported the bill on the ground of Territory autonomy. The second was about representation: given that Australian opinion polls consistently show around seventy per cent of the population in favour of active voluntary euthanasia, a number of observers questioned the right of politicians, many of whom had been elected without their opinions on euthanasia being known to the electorate, to overturn legislation which *prima facie* reflected public feeling. The third theme to emerge in discussion of the bill concerned a perception that the move to overturn the Territory’s Act was the product of a well-organised campaign on the part of religious conservatives. It is this theme which forms the topic of the present discussion.

That a secular state could suddenly fall under the sway of a religious push which apparently contradicted the consistently-expressed will of the majority raised anxieties about the relationship between church and state in Australia, which have lain dormant since the state-aid-to-non-government-schools debates. This theme
emerged strongly in Parliamentary speeches, journalistic comment, talkback radio and letters to the editor, but has received surprisingly little analytical attention. Yet a close examination of the debate and responses to it repays sustained discussion, raising a series of pertinent issues about the relationship between religion and politics. To explore them all would take more than a single paper; instead, I focus on an anomaly between how the debate was perceived and what is recorded in Hansard.

Although the vote was officially a conscience vote, its Cabinet genesis and Prime Ministerial support led one dissenting Coalition member to claim that ‘Howard coming out like that ... put so many people under pressure to fall into line that it really wasn’t a conscience vote’. This interpretation is perhaps borne out by the observation that, although Opposition Leader Kim Beazley and a small number of his Labor Party colleagues supported the bill and some Coalition members opposed it, nevertheless there is a discernible party trend in the way the votes finally fell. The size of the Coalition majority in the House of Representatives thus can be seen as contributing to the bill’s easy passage there, eighty-eight votes to thirty-five. By contrast, the Senate vote was a tight thirty-eight to thirty-four, with one abstention, a closeness perhaps accounted for both by the more even party numbers and by the freer atmosphere which in general characterises Senate deliberations. These factors make the Senate debate the more interesting to explore, and so I concentrate on it.

‘God’s way is the only way’: Religion in the ‘yes’ case

The morning after the vote, Senator Bob Brown, who had vigorously opposed the bill, summarised the response of his disappointed supporters: ‘I finally add that on the eve of Easter, it is quite remarkable that so many people got up and said, ‘I am a Christian. I vote for this bill ...’ However, Senate Hansard tells a rather different story. It is true that much of the discussion had a highly theological flavour. Senators laced their speeches with descriptions of God. But strikingly few of such speeches came from those supporting the bill — that is, broadly, from those speaking against euthanasia. Considering the high profile given to anti-euthanasia positions of some Christian churches in the leadup to the debate, these are the speakers one might have most expected to base their arguments in theological language. In fact, my survey of Hansard found that of the thirty-eight Senators who supported the bill, only six referred to religious grounds in their speeches; and only four of these spoke explicitly of their own religious commitments. By contrast, one third of those on the opposing side (eleven out of thirty-three Senators) cited religious arguments.

As an example of religious argument against euthanasia, South Australian Liberal Senator Grant Chapman declared, ‘My Christian conviction demands my support for the sanctity of life ...’ and concluded that ‘no person has the right to play God with anyone’s life, including their own. Only God has that right’. Tasmanian Liberal Senator Paul Calvert quoted both the National Council of Churches and the Pope against euthanasia, as well as reflecting on his own father’s painful but unassisted death: ‘God’s way was the only way’. Victorian National Party Senator Julian McGauran quoted the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference that ‘euthanasia is a revolt against God’ and observed that ‘many, me included, have reflected upon their own religious beliefs to help them come to a final decision on this matter’.

52 Legislative Studies Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring 1999
However, Senator McGauran, like other speakers against euthanasia who mentioned religious grounds, qualified his approach: 'I stress that Christianity is not a necessary criterion nor was a criterion for some taking a position against euthanasia'. One of the few Labor Senators to support the bill, New South Wales's Michael Forshaw, similarly cautioned that the right to life 'is not just a religious principle or belief. What is often called the “sanctity of life” extends beyond religious faith and belief in a god. It is fundamental, I believe, to human existence, whether one follows a religious faith or not'.

Two of Forshaw's Labor colleagues, Senator Barney Cooney from Victoria and Tasmanian Senator Nick Sherry, reflected on the charge that religious arguments have no place in the public deliberations of a secular polity. Senator Cooney drew a connection between 'religious, cultural and social beliefs which reject euthanasia', which are held by 'a goodly proportion of Australian citizens including me'. His argument was not so much directly theological as one based on the idea of inclusive representation: 'A person’s stance on a particular matter should not be labelled invalid simply because it is based on his or her faith'. Senator Sherry similarly rejected arguments based on state neutrality: 'I am not approaching this from the perspective of an argument relating to church and state and I do not see it as an issue of separating church and state. But I still think that in our Western society these Judeo-Christian principles are very important and should be preserved'.

Supporters of the Andrews Bill appealed most frequently to pragmatic objections: above all, they argued that modern palliative care is sufficient to control pain at the end of life, that sick or elderly people might easily come under pressure from unscrupulous relatives to 'choose' euthanasia and that euthanasia would be a violation of the doctor-patient relationship. When pro-Andrews speakers left pragmatic concerns to invoke general philosophical principles, these were much more likely to be in the secular language of applied ethics than in the terms of moral theology: they gazed down slippery slopes, imagined hypothetical dystopias, and drew economic metaphors like the 'devaluing' of life. The relative sparseness of religious argument sits awkwardly with the perception of religious dominance of the anti-euthanasia side, a perception which seemed strong not only on the part of the public but even among participants on the other side of the debate.

'My God says that is my choice': Religion in the 'no' case
By contrast, I found eleven Senators' speeches which explored religious questions to arrive at conclusions in support of euthanasia. Seven of these couched parts of their argument directly in terms of their own faith. For some, the issue at stake was the refusal to impose beliefs on those who do not share them. Democrat Deputy Leader (now Leader), South Australian Meg Lees, declared, 'I am a practising Christian and I have heard arguments about the sanctity of life from other Christians in this place', but argued that 'parliament should not seek to impose ... beliefs' on those who 'place the notion of quality of life ahead of the sanctity of life'. Similarly, Tasmanian Labor Senator Sue Mackay took issue 'with those honourable senators who would seek to impose their private faith on others with the force of law', while the ACT's Senator...
Kate Lundy saw the issue of representation in terms directly opposite to those invoked by Cooney and Sherry: ‘Passing the Andrews Bill would mean that the Senate is more willing to uphold the values of certain religious groups in our society [who] have mounted a well-resourced, strategic and highly emotive lobbying campaign in support of the Andrews Bill’.

More directly, the Northern Territory’s Country Liberal Party Senator, Grant Tambling, took a stance in keeping with his theological traditions as a Uniting Church lay preacher (and against the majority of his Federal political allies) when he reported that ‘I have certainly searched my own soul throughout the past two years ... and I cannot find any scriptural condemnation of anyone who chooses to take their own life’. Labor Senator Bruce Childs offered one of Hansard’s occasional moments of Biblical exegesis in citing Granville Williams to the effect that ‘the sixth commandment is not “Thou shalt not kill” but “Thou shalt do no murder”’. He further invoked the mutability of theological tradition, pointing out that in the past ‘Many Christians considered that the pain of childbirth was woman’s punishment for Eve’s sin and was given by God as a reminder of this’, while today ‘the concept of denying a woman pain relief because it is God’s will that she should suffer seems barbaric’.

Others went beyond the negative observation that there is no Biblical prohibition on suicide and that in any case Biblical interpretation changes over time, to make positive theological arguments for personal autonomy. Senator Jocelyn Newman, then Minister for Social Security and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, publicly thanked God for her recovery from breast cancer, seeing no conflict between the idea of life as divine gift and a conviction that individuals should nevertheless retain ‘the right to knowingly choose the time of [their] death and the circumstances in which [they] die’. She further invoked the mutability of theological tradition, pointing out that in the past ‘Many Christians considered that the pain of childbirth was woman’s punishment for Eve’s sin and was given by God as a reminder of this’, while today ‘the concept of denying a woman pain relief because it is God’s will that she should suffer seems barbaric’.

Two more speakers explicitly matched an argument for respect for autonomous decision-making about the end of life, with a parallel theme about respect for divergent views of the divine. The then Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Senator Amanda Vanstone, mirrored Senator Crowley’s implied position that different people’s Gods may lead them in different directions, arguing, ‘Your life is not mine to take, but what I do with mine should be between me and my God and no-one else’. The position was made more explicit ‘in a colloquial way’ in her statement that ‘I have always believed that any God is looking for converts not conscripts’. Most elaborately, Tasmanian Greens Senator Bob Brown placed the twin themes of respect for diversity in modes of bioethical decision-making and in modes of religious belief in the context of a detailed creed, confessing,

I believe in a universal life force which gives us that relay of life, passing on from generation to generation, an essential factor being death. It also gives us intelligence, sensitivity, rights and responsibilities. That is my God. And so it is for me to choose about voluntary euthanasia when I am dying and life has been overtaken by the matter of how to die. My God says that is my choice. Others in this place may have a God who does not give them that
choice. Well and good. Abide by your God, but do not force your God on me and I will not force my God on you.21

The third of Brown’s themes here, seeing death, along with life, as an aspect of divine gift, was also developed by other speakers against the Andrews Bill. In contrast to Senators Chapman and Calvert’s assumption that seeing ‘God’s way’ as ‘the only way’ rules out human intervention to hasten death, Labor Senator Brenda Gibbs asked,

How do we know that death is not a beautiful thing? If life on this earth is so unbearable, death is sublime. I have always believed in God or a superior being and I believe that we all have a certain time in this life and then our spirit goes home.”

The idea of life as divine gift was taken by some speakers to conflict with principles of state secularism. Senator Childs challenged the consistency of the view that ‘God gave life and only God can take it away’ by recalling that ‘in my lifetime I have seen that as soon as the flag is raised and patriotic fervour is whipped up, respect for the sanctity of life goes out the window’, often propelled by ‘many of the same people who raise their voices against voluntary euthanasia’. Such people are doubly mistaken, in that ‘If euthanasia is condemned only for religious reasons, then the fact that we live in a secular state should be enough reason to exclude voluntary euthanasia from the criminal code’.22 Labor Senator Kim Carr drew a distinction between the issues of state secularism and representation of religious views which we saw raised in favour of the Andrews Bill by Senators Sherry and Cooney. On one hand, Senator Carr acknowledged ‘that many senators support this bill on genuinely held religious grounds’, affirming ‘the right of any Australian to declare or practise their religion’. But Parliament’s job is to legislate within an established framework, even if that means some views cannot be directly represented: ‘these are religious concepts’, while ‘Australia is a secular nation, and as its Parliament we have an obligation to make secular laws, not religious ones’. The most detailed argument for state secularism was put forward by Senator Vanstone, citing her recent reading of The Godless Constitution: The case against religious correctness23 to invoke sources from Roger Williams through Tocqueville and Jefferson to contemporary studies of the United States constitution.24

God in the Senate: Alien or denizen?

The evidence of Hansard, then, goes against the widely-touted alignment in that the bulk of personal testimony and theological elaboration came from proponents of a right to assisted death. Given the well-known Christian convictions of many Andrews supporters, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that they tended deliberately to avoid mention of their religious motivations. To understand this pattern, I first ask the reverse question: Why did so many of the proponents of individual freedom feel a need to resort to theological language? Why could they not have stuck to their more usual modes of argument? One answer might be that matters of life and death come nearer to the core of how we see ourselves as human and how we understand ourselves in relation to the universe around us than many other questions do. On that point of view, it is not surprising to find our public representatives putting their views
in terms which are unfamiliar in the political arena but which have a tradition of being employed to speak to those deepest conceptions.

But if that is the explanation, one would expect to find comparable strains on the pro-Andrews side. It is hard here to make more than the proverbially risky argument from silence. Yet the texts of the speeches I have been examining do suggest an explanation, namely, that speakers against the Andrews Bill felt a need to resort to the language of personal faith not only because of the depth and sensitivity of the issues concerned, but also because they sensed that an unspoken theological agenda was contained in at least some of the commitments of their opponents.

This is implied, for example, in Senator Lundy's allusion to the 'well-resourced, strategic and highly emotive lobbying campaign' mounted by 'certain religious groups in our society'. Journalists noted the importance of churches' lobbying campaigns in the lead-up to the vote, the Sydney Morning Herald's Jodie Brough commenting that 'Territory rights disappeared as an issue as soon as the anti-euthanasia juggernaut of the Catholic Church, Right to Life and the Anglican Church rolled into Canberra'.

The 'rolling into Canberra' metaphor implies that religious concerns came from 'outside' the conventional sites of political power, propelled by people sufficiently passionate to give their campaign irresistible momentum, while Senators fell, like helpless Jagan-natha devotees, beneath its crushing wheels. In common with other observers, Brough underscores the debate's apparently destabilising characteristics by noting the 'weird bipartisan caucus' of Parliamentary anti-euthanasia campaigners 'which included Coalition senators Eric Abetz and Julian McGauran as well as Labor's Mark Bishop and Independent Senator Brian Harradine', while the anti-Andrews side was marshalled by a similarly weird alliance between Tambling and Northern Territory Labor Senator (and anti-euthanasia Roman Catholic) Bob Collins. On such accounts, both the issue of euthanasia and the campaign against it erupted into national public life as a chaotic intrusion, destabilising existing associations. Left and Right were forced into temporary alliance, while other loyalties, such as Collins's, fractured along lines between religious and local Territorian identity.

Yet the view which interprets the debate of March 1997 as a response to external, religious pressures offers little insight into why the bulk of religiously-framed argument should have come from those opposing the juggernaut. Not all observers saw the anti-euthanasia case's religious impetus as an alien incursion into settled Parliamentary patterns. It may be that a more convincing explanation for the disjunction between perceptions of the debate and what people actually said can be found by considering the anti-euthanasia push not as something swept to the centre by alien forces but as the outworking of existing — if seldom explicitly noted — religious currents within and beneath familiar political institutions.

Developing this line of argument, Senator Chris Schacht noted the politics of the bill's path to the debate:

> When was the last time that a private member's Bill has had this number of hours provided by special arrangement by the government? Why? Because the government itself, under the influence of the Lyons Forum, has made this, in effect, a de facto government Bill.
What makes a religious agenda?

Schacht was not the only one to see the bill's passage as a victory for the Coalition’s Lyons Forum. But an argument that its Lyons Forum association implies a religious agenda does not follow automatically. Named after the Labor-turned-UAP parliamentarian (eventually Prime Minister) Joe Lyons, and Enid Lyons, who combined the achievements of being Australia’s first female parliamentarian and being a mother of twelve, the Lyons Forum has been publicly credited with pushing the Family Tax Package and moves to tighten restrictions on X-rated videos. In addition, a question remains as to whether Independent Senator Brian Harradine, widely held to be the influence behind Cabinet’s rejection of Health Minister Michael Wooldridge’s nominee for chair of the National Health and Medical Research Council on account of the candidate’s views on abortion, was in reality more of a figurehead for a campaign which owed more to the Lyons Forum (many of whose members do, unlike Harradine, actually sit in Cabinet). Despite the high-profile issues associated with its name, surprisingly little public attention has so far been paid to the Lyons Forum. As Kenneth Davidson points out in one of the few analytical articles available,

The Lyons Forum appears to be far more influential within the ranks of the government than the Left faction of the ALP was at any time during the currency of the Hawke-Keating governments or is now that the ALP is in opposition. But so far the Lyons Forum has only had a fraction of the attention given to the factions of the ALP.29

The Forum’s motto and self-descriptions emphasise families as the basis of society, avoiding overtly religious identification. Yet a search for the Lyons Forum in daily newspapers revealed that what little mention has been made of it habitually employs, apparently without challenge or retraction, such descriptions as ‘the Coalition’s ultra-conservative Christian faction’, ‘the Howard-backed fundamentalist Christian faction’, ‘the conservative Christian faction — Australia’s answer to America’s religious right’ or ‘a group of right-wing Christian MPs’.30

The occasional articles which have discussed the Lyons Forum in any detail have generally avoided explicit investigation of the relationship between religion and conservatism in the Forum’s philosophical position, although some, like Bronwyn Pike, have noted similarities between its policy positions and those of Australian Christian Coalition, a lobby group which campaigns for religiously conservative election candidates. In the absence of clarification from the Forum itself about its religious orientation, readers of political commentary which mentions the organisation would assume at least that it has no strong objection to the characterisation of itself as ‘fundamentalist’ or ‘ultra-conservative Christian’.

The dearth of more sustained or nuanced inquiry into the religious impulses of an influential new political force is, on the face of it, surprising. On one hand, Australia lacks a strong tradition of public religious discussion: the cultural secularisation which characterises Australian history has produced a combination of delicate diffidence and casual indifference when it comes to inquiring into so personal a matter as religious belief. On the other hand, in the case of the Lyons Forum, such beliefs are seen to have a significant impact on Australian public life, surely justifying further
inquiry. Further, the last few years have seen a developing trend, perhaps mirroring a broader Americanising tendency in Australian politics, towards public discussion of politicians’ personal lives, including their religious inclinations, so that while such reticence may have existed in the past, it is hard to see that it would remain today.

If cultural secularisation cannot account for it, the reluctance to enquire more closely into connections between the Lyons Forum’s religious dynamics and political orientations might be attributable to Australia’s similarly longstanding tradition of formal secularism. Some participants in the Senate debate expressed the view that, in a secular polity, where religious perspectives are supposed to be kept out of political debate, religious convictions should also be immune from public challenge or critique. Such a requirement is problematic at the best of times; however, when there is widely assumed to be an organised expression of a particular school of religious views in Parliament, the maintenance of state secularism would seem to require more rather than less inquiry into the dynamics involved.

The question of why so many opponents of the Andrews bill talked theology simultaneously conceals and points to what is arguably the more critical question: why so few Andrews supporters chose to do so. In the absence of the more sustained investigative data which would enable a clearer analysis, it is difficult to offer more than speculative conclusions. My contention is that the predominance of religious argumentation on the pro-euthanasia side of the Senate debate and its comparative sparseness on the anti-euthanasia side, coupled with the perception both of observers and participants that the reverse was the case, indicates an impression on the part of the Andrews Bill’s opponents in and out of the Parliament that the campaign by its sponsors reflected a tacit theological agenda which required explicit rebuttal on its own terms. The explicit association drawn by some of them between theological argumentation and an appreciation of the traditions of state secularism suggests that it was this very impulse which contributed to their reluctance to let even an unnamed and acknowledged theological argument have unchallenged sway in the public arena.

The conclusion which suggests itself — and which perhaps motivated the bill’s God-talking opponents — is that many Andrews supporters saw it as tactically advantageous to suppress references which might link them with any organised activity. This speculative conclusion gains support from the observation that, of the six Senators who explicitly invoked religious arguments against euthanasia, three (Forshaw, Sherry and Cooney) are ALP members and a fourth (McGauran) is on the record as having explicitly dissociated himself from the Lyons Forum. Of those my search found invoking theological arguments against euthanasia, only two (Chapman and Calvert) were Lyons Forum members. At the time of the euthanasia debate, a further nine Senators were on the record as having stated that they were members of the group repeatedly called the Coalition’s ‘conservative Christian faction’. That their religious convictions did not form an acknowledged part of their deliberations raises questions both about the accountability of individual politicians for their theological views when those views are relevant to a matter of public debate, and about the accountability of an apparently secretive organisation.

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58 Legislative Studies  
Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring 1999
A storm in a teacup or the tip of an iceberg?

This case study draws attention to a number of issues concerning the relationship between religion and politics in Australia. First, it suggests that Australians' commitment to state secularism generally remains strong, but that among our political representatives — and, one suspects, in the community at large — there is a wide variety of interpretations of the principle, supported by very little formal discussion. Consequently, debate over topics in which the proper relation between the state and various religious positions becomes important is likely to run up against a range of unarticulated assumptions, misunderstandings and failure of the various protagonists to engage successfully with one another's positions.

Second, the descriptions of the Lyons Forum in the press around the time of the euthanasia debates and other matters of public policy on which the Forum held influential views betray a lack of religious sophistication among analysts of such issues. The mismatch between media descriptions of the Lyons Forum (eg 'fundamentalist Christian') and the Forum's descriptions of itself (as 'pro-family', without direct mention of a religious orientation but, at the same time, apparent reluctance to distance itself from the media representations), suggests the issue might repay more sustained inquiry than it has so far received.

Finally, the very paucity of investigation into the relationship between religious conviction and political agendas in an apparently powerful subgroup of Australia's ruling coalition suggests the need for a great deal of conceptual and empirical investigation into the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary Australia in general. The robustness of formal secularism and cultural secularisation may have led to an impression among political analysts that religion has largely disappeared from public life and that, consequently, there is no need for investigation. But such an assumption would rest on an over-stretched interpretation of the division between public and private. Secularism and secularisation do not remove religion from people's consciousness altogether, but rather tend towards its privatisation. Yet, even if such privatisation were completely successful, the individuals who enter public life are formed partly by private influences. The fact that religious influences are widely perceived as operating in the political realm means that they cannot be dismissed as private and therefore quarantined from public scrutiny.

End notes
While in general supporters of the bill gave their reasons for doing so as including their opposition to euthanasia, while those speaking against it argued in favour of voluntary euthanasia, there were exceptions, such as Senator Bob Collins, who declared his opposition to euthanasia while opposing the bill as a violation of the Northern Territory's autonomy. See Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Senate, 25 March 1997.

Especially the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches.


Ibid.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Ibid., 18 March 1997.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Ibid., 19 March 1997.

Ibid.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Tambling's status with the Uniting Church in Australian (UCA) is mentioned by Margo Kingston op. cit. His position fits with that of other self-proclaimed members of the UCA such as Senator Lees, but not with that of Federal Parliament's only ordained member and the sole Democrat supporter of the Andrews Bill, UCA minister Rev. John Woodley. For a discussion of the theological foundations of the Uniting Church's tradition of reluctance to override personal autonomy on bioethical issues, see Andrew Dutney, 'Uniting Church Teaching on Abortion', Australian Religion Studies Review, vol. 11 no. 2, 1998, pp. 72-84.


Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Ibid., 18 March 1997.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.

Ibid., 18 March 1997.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., 20 March 1997.


See, for example, Questions Without Notice: National Health and Medical Research Council, Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Senate, 26 February 1997; Niki Savva, 'The God Squad', Age, 2 April 1997.


N. Savva, op. cit.

Anne Davies, 'Severe Test for John Howard's Integrity', Sydney Morning Herald, 2 April 1997.

In addition to N. Savva, op. cit. and K. Davidson, op. cit., see Lindsay Olney, 'No Sex Please, We're Conservative', Republican, 16 May 1997.
35 See Bronwyn Pike, 'A Lyons Share of Power: The influence of the religious right in contemporary Australian politics', <users.wantree.com.au/~pkelly/lyon/lyon1.htm#11». An interesting exception to the paucity of attention to the Lyons Forum's theological position is a paper by Senator John Woodley, 'Christians in the Lyons den', which appeared in several church-related publications in mid-1997. Woodley, then retiring as president of the non-partisan Parliamentary Christian Fellowship, describes the Lyons Forum as 'the most powerful Christian group in Australia'. The article's focus, however, is Woodley's argument that Christian parliamentarians ought to be concerned with 'economic and social injustice and human rights' rather than preoccupied by matters of personal morality; he pays less attention to analysing the Lyons Forum's actual position than to criticising 'examples of [Government] policy' which 'flew in the face of the Judaeo-Christian ethic but raised not a whisper from the Lyons Forum'.

36 For a sample of recent instances where politicians' religious convictions form the matter of public discussion, see for example David McKenzie, 'Libs Lose One of Their Own to Nile', *Australian*, 8 April 1998; Richard McGregor, 'Crossing the Floor', *Australian*, 14-15 November 1998; ABC TV Compass, 'What Our Leaders Believe', 20 September 1998.

37 For a discussion of the relationship between secularisation (as a cultural trend) and institutional secularism (as a principle of political theory and practice), see Marion Maddox, 'Separation or engagement? Religion and politics in postmodern Australia' in Mark Hutchinson (ed.), *Religion and the Republic*, Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, Macquarie University, NSW, 1999, forthcoming.

38 Such arguments were not confined to Lyons Forum members — see for example speeches of ALP Senators Cooney and Sherry, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Senate*, 18 March 1997 and 20 March 1997 respectively.

39 For a helpful discussion of this issue, see for example William Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralisation*, Minneapolis University Press, 1995, especially chapters 4 and 6.

40 See the list of 'Coalition Members of Parliament [who] have stated that they are not members of the Lyons Forum, in response to a telephone inquiry', posted on the web site of anti-censorship group Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA) at <www.efa.org.au/Issues/Censor/lyons>.

41 The EFA web site lists Senators Abetz, Calvert, Chapman, Ferguson, Gibson, Herron, Minchin, O'Chee, Parer, Tierney and Watson as having claimed Lyons Forum membership. It also lists Senator Jocelyn Newman; however, she had dissociated herself from the group before the Andrews Bill was debated, and, as we saw above, spoke against it. See Jodie Brough, 'Newman's Plea a Blow to Anti-Euthanasia Forces', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 March 1997.