

Is FLI worth supporting?

When I took on the role of **Executive Director** of Family Life International (Australia) Ltd. (FLI) on **the 1st October 2010** I was quite excited about the opportunity to work on a full time basis in the pro-life/pro-family world and my ambition and goal was **to make FLI into a substantial force in Australian social and political life**. To be the voice for the voiceless and to defend the defenceless. Now it is six years just past I have been in the position and we certainly are not the force in Australian social and political life I had hoped for.

As a supporter of FLI over this time it is certainly important that you know what we have been doing and what sort of projects your hard earned donations have gone to. When I started going through the major projects we have run and the financial support we have been able to offer, I was quite amazed. Considering that the first two years of my tenure were spent working completely without being paid, due to the lack of funds for FLI, we have achieved a great deal. The question I want to ask you now is this: **“Is it worth continuing to financially support FLI?”** To assist you with your answer here are the highlights of our last six years.

Firstly we established a **Board of Advisers** which includes now **Archbishop Julian Porteous as the Patron of FLI, former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr John Anderson AO**, as well as many experts in the fields of Medicine, Law, Theology, Philosophy, Psychology and Economics. After bringing them all into the FLI fold, we then held a dinner to share the vision I had for FLI. We called that the inaugural “Advisory Panel Dinner” and it was held at the Good Shepherd Seminary at Homebush in Sydney. Some of our more generous donors were invited to this dinner.

One of the most important tasks we have undertaken was the hugely successful and very generously supported **New York Retreat back in 2011**. We took 30 young pro-life activists to the Precious Blood Monastery in Brooklyn, New York for 12 days to learn from the greatest pro-lifer in the world, **Monsignor Phillip Reilly**. Of the 30, FLI paid the expenses of 15 of them and myself. We personally paid for my wife to attend with us. Go back to our Lifelines edition following this retreat and read the articles the 15 attendees we paid for wrote, to see the impact it had on them. You can find that edition on our website.

We have held many **40 Days for Life Campaigns in Sydney**. These have all been a great success. It is also great to see the clergy getting involved in the fight for life. Archbishop Julian Porteous, when an Auxiliary Bishop in Sydney would

often lead the opening or closing days for the campaigns. Bishop Terry Brady, current Auxiliary of Sydney has also often been involved with 40 Days for Life. Both of these two Bishops have shown great courage in the face of the culture of death. Beside the two Bishops, we have had many priests involved from FSSP, Dominicans, Redemptorists, Franciscans and Diocesan. 40 Days for Life is a campaign that takes a lot of time and effort to both organise and maintain.

This year we did not hold a campaign as we ran the Life & Family Conference in Albury late January and as Lent began early this year it would have been very difficult. Overall since taking over there have been five 40 Days for Life campaigns that I have directed.

I have also run **workshops around Australia** to set up 40 Days for Life Campaigns **and have been to New Zealand**, at the invitation of FLI New Zealand to speak at their conference and run a 40 Days for Life training workshop. We have run two, **three day, pro-life training workshops in Sydney**, for people from around Australia to learn the very important aspects to holding and maintaining a prayerful, pro-life presence in front of abortion mills successfully. We have **supported many pro-life groups** in their efforts outside abortion mills in cities **around Australia**, with legal and practical support which has entailed many trips interstate.

The **Day of the Unborn Child**, held on the Sunday closest to the feast of the Annunciation, is something that **FLI is committed to** and will continue to be. Again it takes months of planning. Over the years the numbers have been fairly consistent ranging from **2,500 - 3,000 people in attendance**. I wonder why, in a city the size of Sydney, is this all we can attract for an event that takes about an hour once a year to highlight the injustice of abortion and to make reparation for this grave sin? Is it apathy, ignorance, or both, or something else?

The Day of the Unborn Child procession has been led in the last six years by **Archbishop Anthony Fisher, Archbishop Julian Porteous, Bishop Terry Brady and Maronite Eparchy Bishop Antoine Charbel Tarabay**. We thank them all for their commitment to life.

As mentioned above **we ran a conference this year in Albury**. This was **the second such conference** that we have held since I started working full-time at FLI. The first of these conferences was held in **January 2012**, on the Australia Day weekend. This conference featured Monsignor Phillip Reilly, Bishop Julian Porteous, Steve Mosher and a host of highly qualified speakers. It was a roaring success **with 550 attendees** in total. The DVD's of all the talks

at that conference have now been loaded onto our website where you can watch them in full. All these talks still have great relevance today.

The second conference, as mentioned earlier, was held **this year in January** and attracted **over 220 attendees** and was a great success on many levels. Registration costs were kept to close to the cost of the conference 4 years earlier and represented great value. **Archbishop Julian Porteous, Bishop Caesar Bonivento, Steve Mosher, Dr Angela Lanfranchi, Dr Vice Batarelo** and **9 other local speakers** made an impressive lineup. Unfortunately the numbers were much less this time and we suffered a substantial loss on this event. I have to seriously question whether it is worth running conferences in the future.

Apart from the inaugural dinner, we have had **another two Board of Directors dinners**. One in Parramatta which **featured Mr John Anderson AO** as our key note speaker and another at Canterbury Leagues Club in February 2014, with **Senator Cory Bernardi** as the key note speaker. This was a significantly larger evening as we opened it up and made it a ticketed event. We had over 250 guests, including **Bishop Peter Comensoli, The Honourable, Reverend Fred Nile MLC and his wife Silvana and the current Chancellor of the Sydney Archdiocese, Mr Chris Meney**.

We have prepared, printed and distributed “**Pro-Life Voting Guides**” for every Federal and State election since I took over. These have been very popular and successful in helping many people understand the intricacies and nuances in making your vote count most effectively. They are seen as **the benchmark in voting guides** to the extent that they have been taken up by other pro-life organisations who have sent them on to their own supporters!

We have also given **financial and material support to many mothers** before and after their babies are born. The financial support over the last three years has significantly increased and has been **about \$85,000 with \$45,000 of that in the last year!** We ran a **four city speaking tour with four speakers, Steve Mosher, Dr Deirdre Little, Dr Andrew Foong and myself in 2013**, we have held **Parish afternoon seminars** in several parishes in Sydney and country NSW, I spoke at the **Melbourne Regional World Congress of Families event in 2014** and have been very much involved in **the campaign to defend Marriage** which has involved many meetings and included my presence on a **Federal Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee hearing**.

We have been at the forefront of organising **the legal defence of pro-lifers** who have been arrested for testing the **totalitarian “safe access” zone laws** implemented in Tasmania, Victoria and the ACT. There are Bills before the NSW and Queensland Parliaments for similar laws. This will not only curtail the freedom of speech of pro-life Christians but effectively removes the Christian voice from the public domain. **These laws must be defeated**, however this has taken much time and effort.

We have also moved office in that time (2013), had significant changes to our Board of Directors, **built a new website and much more**. FLI needs your support to continue doing this work we undertake. If not us then who will? It is up to you to ensure that life is protected and respected by all. Please donate generously, for without your support we cannot move forward into the future.

I began this letter by asking, **“Is FLI worth supporting?”** If it is then please **send your most generous donation now**. If not then please advise us and we can remove your name from our mailing list. If everyone on our mailing list **donated just \$100** each then we would have **sufficient funds for well into 2018** when included with our regular donations. I know some of you are already giving your most generous support to us and that some cannot give at this time due to your own financial obligations, but if all those who can help, were to send their most generous donation, I’m sure it would more than cover those who, at this time, cannot support us.

May God bless you all and please be assured of our ongoing prayers for all our supporters and your families. Be assured of our continuing commitment to the defence of the defenceless and life, faith and family.

Paul Hanrahan
Executive Director