

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY FISHER OP RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION ZONE LAW**

Anthony Fisher, the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, and Metropolitan of the Bishops of NSW, said he was extremely disappointed by the NSW Parliament's decision to pass laws that will punish (with up to 12 months' imprisonment) any opposition to abortion - even expressed in silent prayer or by the offer of assistance to a vulnerable woman, occurring near an abortion clinic.

"This legislation goes further than a simple change of law establishing a 150m exclusion zone," Archbishop Fisher said. "It is a direct attack on freedom of religion, speech and association.

"It also removes the ability of groups and people, who want to offer women real choices, and provide practical and alternative options to vulnerable women and their partners, who sadly find themselves in a situation where they feel they have no other support.

"Every year I celebrate Mass at St Mary's Cathedral for the Day of the Unborn Child and every year, it is disrupted by protesters with worshippers harassed and abused as they come to pray for the unborn.

"But no 'bubble zone' has been put in place around churches. It's as if the only thing that is 'sacred' is an abortion clinic.

"Now, even the right to peaceful prayer on some public streets in NSW has now been removed and dissent made a criminal act.

"The impact of this new law should not be underestimated."

Director of the Archdiocese of Sydney's Life, Marriage and Family Centre, Christopher Gordon, also condemned the passing of the Bill.

"The pro-lifers outside the clinics are the only people offering practical support to vulnerable pregnant women many of whom are coerced into having an abortion," he said.

"These new laws prevent pro-lifers from offering this support and is a backwards step for our state. If abortion is the best thing we can offer a vulnerable pregnant woman then we are failing badly.

“The real aim of these laws is to take away any scrutiny of the lucrative abortion industry. We know in practice that the clinics do not offer any real alternatives to abortion to the women.”

Media inquiries

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