

Victorian doctors ‘protecting’ Daniel Andrews over euthanasia

RICHARD FERGUSON THE AUSTRALIAN 4:46PM October 18, 2017

The national president of the doctors’ union has unloaded on his Victorian counterparts, accusing them of being silent on euthanasia and “protecting” their relationship with the Andrews Labor government.

AMA president Michael Gannon told *The Australian* he was “disappointed” in AMA Victoria after the state branch blasted a tweet he had sent out condemning Daniel Andrews and other Victorian politicians for using emotional stories about parents’ deaths to advance the assisted dying bill.

“Up until today, I think AMA Victoria have put out only one press release on the euthanasia debate in the past six months,” he said.

AMA Victoria has published two press releases since July on euthanasia, the latter condemning the AMA national president.

Dr Gannon said he empathised with anyone who had suffered the death of a parent but stood by his tweet which his Victorian branch labelled “offensive”.

“I don’t apologise; they are powerful emotional stories but this bill will make life more difficult for my members and make life more dangerous for my patients,” he said.

AMA policy nationwide on euthanasia is that doctors should not be involved in the killing of patients but later states it’s up to society and government to make laws.

Victorian branch president Dr Lorriane Baker told *The Australian* while the first point is important, she says doctors must ultimately follow the laws voted on by parliament and she wants a “seat on the table” if an assisted dying bill gets up.

Dr Gannon said the first principle of the doctors’ union policy on assisted suicide is more important.

“Point one is at the top of the policy, point three about governments making laws is number three; you usually put the most important point up the top,” he said.

Dr Gannon also said the Victorian branch was “keenly protective of its relationship with the premier and the Victorian health minister (Jill Hennessy).”

“This is a national issue and I’ll continue speaking out; this is not just about the relationship between AMA Victoria and the Victorian Labor Government.”

In return, Dr Baker said she stood by her state branch launching an attack on its national boss.

“It is unusual but we pledged to hold up a very high standard of behaviour and those tweets were not up to that standard; we need to conduct this debate with respect,” she said.

“There are many doctors who want us to just focus on point one but doctors have to follow the laws made by parliament.”

Dr Baker declined to call on Dr Gannon to apologise saying her statement “speaks for itself”.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/v...drews-over-euthanasia/news-story/a21b11b549cb892a2b286d2ce7a0b662>