

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 57
Submitted by: Alon Barnes
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Position: I/We do not support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill
Comments in relation to: The request and assessment process,Safeguards
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

I am a hospital physician (BSc MBBS FRACP). I daily see the frail and the elderly and the suffering.

With all due respect, the quality of care that many patients experience in our health facilities is sub standard. I am not surprised when I encounter an unfortunate soul who faces social disadvantage at home and neglect in our hospitals, and in despair they consider their life not worth living.

Let us not send them a grim reaper to slay, but an angel to save.

This bill will be abused. The Acute Resuscitation Plan used in Queensland hospitals today specifies which life saving treatments a patient does and does not 'want' to receive. It has been reduced to such simplicity that it does not even require the patient to sign it! The patient is seldom aware that they must consent to such a form. Often the doctor informs them of 'their choices'. Sometimes the doctor does not even disclose that such a form has been filled out to prohibit certain life sustaining treatments. This was the tragic case of one of my patients Mr S.M. aged 21. I have documented his case and his family would be willing to verify such. We already witness gross failure to safeguard our patients who are helplessly subjected to institutional power imbalance. Would you trust us doctors with a licence to kill?

I do not mean to disrespect any beneficent intentions behind this bill but if it passes I will find myself in violation of this law as I will neither provide such a service nor facilitate a patient accessing such a service from others. Please feel free to keep my AHPRA registration number ([REDACTED]) in the event that this requires my de-registration.

Sincerely
Dr Alon Barnes
General Physician
BSc MBBS FRACP