

**Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021**

**Submission No.:** 64  
**Submitted by:** Morag Roy  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Position:** I/We do not support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill  
**Comments in relation to:** Eligibility criteria\* ,Safeguards,Conscientious objection by either individuals or entities  
**Attachments:** No attachment

**Submitter Comments:**

I am concerned about the implications of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 and am writing to you to consider the following.

In the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill the first Principle cited that 'underpins the act' is the claim that 'human life is of fundamental importance.' My concern with both the Termination of Pregnancy Bill of 2018 and now this Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill is that it actually FAILS to respect the fundamental importance of human life. What value do we give life when we allow the death of a human child up until birth? Now we have progressed to allow assisted suicide for those with a disease, illness or medical condition or 'intolerable suffering' [physical or mental] that is expected to cause death within 12 months. My concern is that we are sending a subtle message that lives are dispensable and therefore we devalue humanity.

As a registered nurse for 43 years I have seen many patients as they died with dignity from untreatable diseases. My own Mother in law died of bowel cancer on the 25th January 1998. Throughout that process she was supported and her comfort assured by professional, caring Palliative Care teams. We were able to have precious moments with her during the months after her diagnosis. There is fear in death and the suffering that sometimes comes with it, but I would prefer that we support the poorly funded Palliative options than pour funding and resources into a complicated and flawed Voluntary Assisted Dying option.

I have studied the Bill and there are glaring inconsistencies and carefully worded statements that need to be clarified.

The right of a practitioner to have their views, conscience and beliefs honoured. Conscientious objectors should have the freedom to not only refuse to assist but should not be made to refer the patient to other practitioners.

For the same reason, there is concern that Permanent Residence facilities [Aged Care Facilities] may be forced to comply with Voluntary Assisted Dying requests that go against their core values. I agree that the brochures and information on their websites should advertise that they do not provide Voluntary Assisted Dying at their facility and this should be honoured and protected.

Voluntary Assisted Dying should be registered as the cause of death. Saying that they have died from their disease rather than suicide is an oxymoron. If you aim for this Bill and process to be legally transparent and acceptable, surely is there no need to record the details incorrectly. How can the effectiveness of this Act be ascertained in 3 years time if the records are falsified.

In 149 (2) there is a section on the protection of health practitioners and ambulance officers that States:

'No civil or criminal liability attaches to the protected person for NOT administering the life sustaining treatment.'

My concern is that there are no protections for a health practitioner who DOES administer life sustaining treatment, mistakenly or intentionally.

A person must not, dishonestly or by coercion, induce another person to make, or revoke, a request for access to voluntary assisted dying. Maximum penalty—7 years imprisonment. Families who disagree with this process would lose their 'right' to even talk to their loved one about alternatives for fear that this could be seen as 'coercion'.

As a registered nurse all my working life, I pledged to save life. I have sat with people as they walk through the process of death. In my nursing training, I was handed a beautiful, living, breathing baby that had been removed from a perfectly healthy woman in a late term abortion. I was forced to dispose of him. I can still see his tiny body fighting for life as he lay in the receiver.

Why do those elected to power in Queensland feel they have the right to lock down a state in order to 'protect the vulnerable' but at the same time we do not value the multiple 'vulnerable' lives taken in abortion clinics and now through Voluntary Assisted Dying? There are so many illogical inconsistencies when we decide to take the slippery slope to devalue LIFE. A prime example is the case in Queensland where a 6 month pregnant woman and her partner were killed by a drunk, juvenile driver. The driver SHOULD have been charged with the death of THREE humans. Why wasn't he? A 6 month baby in utero is not considered 'a life' in an abortion clinic; how then can his/her life matter when killed outside of the 'safely protected' confines of your laws [Termination of Pregnancy 2018 laws]

For many, many Queenslanders these laws are abhorrent. As this Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill is debated in your Parliament I hope you will contemplate the implications and the flaws that I have outlined and consider those who value the sanctity of life.