

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

**Submission No.:** 107  
**Submitted by:** Maggie Stanke  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Position:** I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill  
**Comments in relation to:** Other  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

## Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

About ten years ago my friend died in a Queensland hospital from cancer. She was given help for pain, but food and water was withdrawn (I imagine to hasten her death). To help her thirst she was given crushed ice to moisten her mouth. Before slipping into a coma from the pain relief she told me how very thirsty she was and how much she'd love to have a glass of champagne with me but I know she meant water. The coma wasn't constant and when she became conscious her husband told me she was given some crushed ice and pain relief again but complained of thirst. I later found out this was part of a Plan similar to the 'Liverpool Pathway' set out in the UK to make dying easier, more caring & kinder for the patient and allows staff to know what 'stage of dying' the patient is at. I don't think dying of thirst as well as cancer is kind at all.

Sadly it's not pain that makes me worry about dying, because that has mostly been brought under control these days. People die choking, from seizures, gasping for air in terror. My fear is the length of time, and the present lack of any help to die quickly. I'm in my seventies now and have visited friends in Hospices, heard their stories about Palliative Care which helps people live a more pleasant life PRIOR to dying but just like hospitals, Hospices with the best Palliative Care in the world cannot help a person dying in dreadful circumstances to die any quicker or be put out of their misery. I've read a story related by a man whose wife was dying from Stage IV cancer in a Hospice on tubes, who begged to have them taken out so she could die. He asked his wife's doctor what would happen & was told his wife would go to sleep and die. What happened was his wife struggled in dreadful pain for seven hours with seizures that came in waves when she was given something to calm her for a while. He felt traumatised by how terrible his wife's death was. Palliative Care could do nothing for her.

It's about time the Medical Profession stopped washing their hands of this important issue much like Pontius Pilate. In my opinion, “**Do No Harm**” also means **not standing by watching**, while a patient suffers needlessly while dying, when they have already expressed their wish to be helped to die quickly and painlessly by medical means.

Of course many doctors for religious or ethical reasons will not wish to be involved with helping terminal patients die with dignity, which is understandable, but I feel sure many will.

I sincerely hope this VAD Bill will be passed here in Queensland.

*Margaret Stanke*

*17 June 2021*