

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

**Submission No.:** 193  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Position:** I/We do not support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill  
**Comments in relation to:** Other  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to submit for your consideration my recent experience of journeying with my mother to her death earlier this year, with the hope that you will give consideration to recommending to people the palliative care option to dying rather than taking the drastic step of euthanasia.

My mother (who died at 96 years of age) suffered both renal and liver failure and, when first diagnosed, was told that she had three weeks to live – maximum. However, she surprised us all by living a further eight months, dying in February 2021. During that time, her health deteriorated and she was largely bed-ridden, with several visits to hospital along the way.

At no time, did she express a desire to end her life prematurely as she felt fully supported by her family who visited her each day and the staff of the aged care home where she resided saw to her needs in a loving manner. She was adamant about not being euthanised and, in fact, she insisted on it being written into her advanced care plan which she made when she was diagnosed with the renal and liver failure.

With the guidance of her doctor and the wonderful staff of State Government Community Acute and Non-acute Services, we were able to make appropriate and timely decisions to assist my mother, especially in the area of pain control, so that she was comfortable and her pain was minimal.

With this love, support and expertise in palliative care, my mother was able to die with dignity naturally, without the use of drugs to end her life prematurely. She lived to celebrate her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday in January 2021 and to see her newest great grandchild who was born in Melbourne in the previous July and who was able to be brought to Queensland in January to join in these joyous birthday celebrations.

As a family, we feel that my mother was able to live life to the full at all stages of her life as much as her aging condition allowed. It was a comfort to the family that we were able to journey with her in her dying days, that we did not hurry her death along through euthanasia but just let her slip quietly away to her death.

I would strongly recommend the palliative care pathway as the means of dying with dignity rather than the means proposed by voluntary assisted dying where, either the person has to kill themselves and/or someone has to assist them do it. There is an element of illogicality here: on the one hand, society spends thousands of dollars trying to stop people (especially young people) from suiciding (even though, in their own minds, they would consider that suicide was the best option for them at the time); on the other hand, society appears to be quite happy for an old/terminally ill person to kill themselves arguing that this is the best option for them given their condition – same option but a different response from society. Looking at it from another perspective: society considers murder to be a criminal offence but, when it comes to killing an old/terminally ill person, then murder is sanctioned, especially as the State allows the provision of the lethal drugs. Does society see more value in the young person's life over that of an older/unwell person? Is it happy to live with these contradictions? Is the State happy to have "blood on its hands"?

There is the adage going around that a suffering dog will be put out of its misery; why not a suffering human being? But a human being is much more than a dog and should be treated as a human being not a dog. It is through palliative care that the human being can receive this higher level of care which they deserve and their dignity is upheld.

Thank you for considering my submission.