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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 June 2021 10:44 PM  
**To:** Health and Environment Committee  
**Subject:** How can this be allowed?

Re: How can this be allowed?

Dear Health and Environment Committee,

I'm writing to voice my serious concerns about the Voluntary Assisted Dying 2021 Bill.

It may sound strange or provocative but one should probably consider the issue of capital punishment when a discussion is held about euthanasia as both involve a government or state endorsing the termination of a human life. A death by euthanasia of a misdiagnosed person or someone who has not been provided appropriate pain relief, is just as irreversible as a death of an innocent person by capital punishment.

I would suggest that this risk alone is a strong argument to be very cautious about the legalisation of euthanasia. Except for the state of Victoria, it had been unlawful in Australia except for a short period in the Northern Territory in 1996-1997. Records show that 4 of the 7 people euthanised under the Northern Territories act at that time showed signs of depression. This highlights the risk to vulnerable groups which include the elderly, those with mental illness, and those that have been misdiagnosed.

Would any potential government legislation really guarantee that it could protect people suffering with treatable depression, or protect people from elder abuse and other forms of family coercion from choosing to be euthanised unnecessarily? And what of protections for doctors and nurses who conscientiously object to euthanasia?

There would be complex ethical issues between health professionals and the health system if euthanasia was legalised. It's not a simple issue as some think.

Thought provoking when a government 'health system' could be extended to enable people to take their own lives.

Sincerely,  
Lorna West

Sincerely,  
Lorna West  
[REDACTED]

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