
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 17 June 2021 10:36 PM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: I oppose the "Voluntary Assisted Dying" Bill

Re: I oppose the "Voluntary Assisted Dying" Bill

Dear Health Committee Members,

I am strongly opposed to this Bill for the following reasons:

- There are no mental health checks. There is no requirement for an assessment by a mental health expert. There is no requirement for an assessment by a specialist in the area of the patient's suffering. Mental anguish and depression is a key driver for requests for euthanasia but can be treated by a psychologist. Specialists can also advise treatments that with palliative care can relieve much of the suffering.
- There is no requirement for the patient to be seen by a palliative care specialist. Patients thus may never get the option of trying palliative care.
- The two doctors approving access to euthanasia can be junior GPs with little to no end-of-life training and experience. Palliative care specialists have 4 years fulltime training in such care after they get their medical degree.
- The patient can access euthanasia almost immediately but may not be able to access palliative care until a few weeks or months before the end of life. In regional areas they may not be able to access palliative care at all.
- Doctors and health institutions who are opposed to euthanasia would be forced to refer patients for it and would thus see themselves as complicit in the act.
- Aged Care institutions that have charters opposed to euthanasia e.g. Catholic Health Australia and UnitingCare would be forced to permit the poison to be delivered to the patient or let an outside doctor come in and kill the patient.
- The Australian Medical Association, Nurses Professional Association of Queensland, and 107 out of 109 national medical bodies are opposed to euthanasia of any kind.
- I am concerned that the rate of non-assisted suicide will increase as it has done in Victoria possibly a suicide cognition effect.
- Trying to talk someone out of assisted suicide could put one (e.g. a family member) in jail for up to 7 years.
- Death certificates would be falsified for people who access assisted suicide to record their underlying sickness as the cause of death instead of suicide or euthanasia.
- The QLD Premier wants "tele-deaths" legalised so people can access assisted suicide via the a mere phone call or over the internet. She has asked the Prime Minister to change the telecommunications / carriage laws to facilitate this.
- The Bill is really trying to avoid the proper funding of palliative care. QLD Health only has 134 dedicated palliative care beds. Palliative Care QLD has estimated the funding deficit to be about \$275M per year. This is most clearly seen in regional QLD where some areas have no palliative care services. The AMA and Catholic Health Australia constantly call for palliative care funding to be increased substantially.

Please carefully and fully consider my submission and stop this Bill going to a vote.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Crowther

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