
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 26 June 2021 3:48 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,

26th June 2021

To the Queensland Parliament Health Committee:

Re: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill

Thankyou for the opportunity to make a submission on this important subject. As a concerned Queenslander, I love my state and want the best for all my fellow Queenslanders today and in the future. I am delighted to offer my perspective on this issue, which I trust will be helpful to you in reaching an informed decision on the matter of voluntary assisted dying.

I will first share some relevant details of myself and several family members close to me. I was born in Brisbane, and I am now a chartered professional engineer. My grandfather, whom I loved deeply, passed away slowly from a painful form of cancer. My father is a registered nurse and my sister is a general practitioner (GP). I, and all my family, are thankful for the exceptional palliative care available in our state. We unanimously oppose any form of voluntary assisted dying.

It is true that a small handful of countries around the world have enacted laws permitting euthanasia in some circumstances. This is a sad reflection that such countries have accepted a collective reduction in their will to live. The outcomes are frightening. One example is that some in dire circumstances who have not lost their personal will to live still feel the pressure from others (real or perceived) to do so. It is a terrible thing to encourage people to give up on life.

There is one important distinction that must be clearly understood: The compassionate provision of care (such as palliative care) and the compassionate withdrawal of such care if required (such as the decision not to pursue further rounds of chemotherapy), should never be confused with an act intended to kill (such as lethal injection). "Letting" people die is very different from "helping" them to die. We should continue to help each other increase our quality of life while we are alive. This is why we have hospitals and doctors, engineers and politicians. We cannot ultimately prevent death, but we can increase our quality of life, for those who so desire, until death eventually comes naturally to us all.

We must acknowledge our mortality. Death is a fact of life. We will all die eventually. Some of us will die a painless death, while others (perhaps myself) will die with excruciating pain – maybe slowly over several years. I personally have experienced pain in my life, as we all do to varying degrees. Pain is a horrible thing, yet it is a very real part of being human. Pain may increase or decrease as we approach the day of our own death. This is why good palliative care is so vital.

Helping people to die is another matter. There is no need to disguise the truth with euphemisms. From here on I will refer to "voluntary assisted dying" as "suicide".

To be clear, the pre-meditated act of bringing about an early death is known by different names depending on the circumstances:

1. If the victim is unwilling, it is called “murder”. (This is involuntary.)
2. If the victim is willing, it is called “suicide”. (This is voluntary.)

Any form of pre-meditated termination of one’s own life is suicide, whether or not that person receives assistance and whether or not that person’s own hand performs the lethal deed.

In Australia today, suicide is a major and growing issue. If we can successfully intervene, we do not let our friends kill themselves. We do everything we can to protect them from themselves, even though we often cannot change the root cause of the loss of their will to live. But we do try.

The motives for suicide are many. Suicidal deaths are distributed across all people groups of differing age, gender, religion, education, health, finances and relationship status. If we permit some people suicide but not others, we are discriminating unfairly.

Why do we have a cultural aversion to suicide? The reason is simple:

Human life is sacred.

I share the concern of many fellow Australians that a public acceptance of any form of suicide for any group of Queenslanders by an act of parliament would be a grave encroachment on the sanctity of human life. A people group who allows – and even helps – its own to kill themselves has lost a fundamental part of the understanding of the meaning of life.

Human life has value. We all endure suffering at times – some more than others. But we must not give up on life. It is true to say that many who have patiently endured the worst suffering on earth have become some of the greatest, most influential men and women in human history.

It is embedded within the Australian ethic and the legacy of our ancestors that we look after our mates. The human values of compassion, self-sacrifice and courage dictate that we help to lessen the suffering of our fellow man and woman when it is within our means to do so. We can always do something to help a mate, even if it is only a single word of encouragement when all seems lost. The Aussie battler keeps on fighting, no matter the odds.

I sincerely believe suicide should not be legalized in any form in our state. We will all die eventually, but it does not need to be by our own doing.

We are now able, perhaps more so than at any other time in history, to provide comfort for those who suffer and longevity of life for those who desire. Let our efforts and resources be spent in so doing.

I speak on behalf of many Queenslanders as I write you this letter.

Sincerely,

Timothy Daniels BEng (Hons) CPEng RPEQ

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Timothy Daniels

