

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 912
Submitted by: Alan Johnson
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Position: I/We do not support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill
Comments in relation to: The request and assessment process, Safeguards, Conscientious objection by either individuals or entities, Oversight and review
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

Dear members of the Queensland Parliamentary Health Committee

1. Palliative care severely underfunded

Just recently Palliative Care Queensland called for an extra \$121 million in funding per year. Instead, the State Government provided only an extra \$28.5 million per year.

It's not right to offer euthanasia to the dying and vulnerable when so many are already missing out on the care they require and dying in pain as a result. It's said that euthanasia will provide a choice for those at the end of their lives. But for those many Queenslanders who are currently dying in pain because they don't have access to palliative care, how can we say that euthanasia is a choice? Euthanasia will not give real choice.

2. Doctors do not support the Bill

Our medical professionals know that the answer to suffering is properly funded and delivered Palliative Care, not euthanasia.

Australian Medical Association President Dr Chris Perry recently stated to media:

"People need to be kept comfortable in their dying times, and it's not by Voluntary Assisted Dying, it's by Palliative Care. So, I think they [the Government] should step up now and spend the money."

3. No conscientious objection

Section 84, Subsection 2 of the Bill states that if a medical professional has a conscientious objection to euthanasia, they must still provide the patient with information about someone who does support euthanasia. This means that doctors will be forced to participate in the process of euthanasia even if it goes against their conscience and professional judgement.

4. Open to abuse

We already know that many elderly Queenslanders are abused, mistreated and taken advantage of by the very people who are supposed to care for them - relatives, friends and carers.

How many more will become victims under a Bill that takes away their right to life and care by offering assisted suicide instead?

5. In 2018 my brother William died from Pancreatic Cancer. He was given 6 months to live and he lived quite well and fully aware for about 11 month's until his death on 3 November 2019. I was his main carer and attended to his initial admission to Regis Nursing Home as he required 24 hour care.

█████ offered Palliative Care but it was clear they were unable to undertake that care and we were led to believe that Palliative Care was only available in the last few days of life. At █████ Bill was obviously in extreme pain and we insisted he be admitted to Logan Palliative Care Unit where they arranged a Pain Management Plan which included a Nikki Pump. The Nikki was literally a Godsend for Bill to have his pain managed very well, while receiving compassionate 24 hour care for four weeks by who we believe are the best Palliative Care doctors and nurses around. It was the Palliative Care that gave Bill the extended time to arrange his affairs and sell his home, make a new Will, see his family from New Zealand. Say his goodbyes. Thank God for our merciful and kind Palliative Care Units, we believe they are seriously underfunded and terminal patient's deserve better than being offered assisted death. Life is better lived well and allowed to end well by all. Death should never be brought forward of life's natural conclusion. I reflect on this statement, Doctors do no harm (Do not Kill) . That is what should happen. Kindness not harm. My families view is legalising assisted suicide/euthanasia is a bad idea.