

Health and Environment Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 3:20 PM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 - Submission

Categories: Submission

Re: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 - Submission

Dear Health and Environment Committee,

I write this as a submission to the Queensland Health Committee, to oppose the Bill in its current form.

There are many aspects of the Bill that I have strong concerns about, some of which are listed below.

* Eligibility is based on the approval of two doctors who don't have to be specialists, and there is actually no requirement for the patient to be examined by a specialist at any stage of their illness. The two approving doctors can be junior GPs with little or no specialised training in end of life management. There is no requirement for a patient to be seen by a palliative care specialist.

* Doctors with a conscientious objection to euthanasia would be forced to refer patients for it, and therefore be complicit in the outcome of a patient killed.

* A doctor or nurse can raise the idea of assisted suicide in the context of discussing end-of-life options. This is very dangerous because at this time patients are at an incredibly vulnerable point, feeling unwell and distressed by their prognosis.

* The Bill allows people with a prognosis of 12 months to be eligible for assisted suicide. In other Australian jurisdictions, legislation stipulates a six month prognosis - So this new Bill is allowing access six months earlier than all other assisted suicide legislation in Australia.

* Trying to talk someone out of killing themselves could put a person in jail for up to 7 years. (Section 141) This bill would have family members or friends jailed for promising to care for their loved one who is contemplating ending their life. This is absolutely absurd.

* There is no requirement for those requesting assisted suicide to be assessed by a mental health expert (eg psychiatrist), yet depression and mental anguish is one of the main drivers for euthanasia requests (as shown in data from other jurisdictions).

* The Bill would allow euthanasia straight away for people with a 12-month prognosis, but they may not be able to access palliative care until a few weeks or months before the end of life (and if they're in regional Queensland, they may not have ANY access to palliative care at all).

The most vulnerable are not receiving adequate protection in this Bill, and if passed it will lead to wrongful deaths in Queensland, including people who have received incorrect prognosis or diagnosis, coercion, elder abuse, untreated mental anguish, or those receiving little or no access to palliative care specialists.

The above aspects of the proposed law make it very clear that this Bill is dangerous, and not about 'healthcare' at all.

I urge you to reject this Bill.

Sincerely,
Alana Phillips



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