

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 1094
Submitted by: Merle Ross
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Position: I/We do not support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill
Comments in relation to: Safeguards,Other
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

There are two main areas I will address.

The first is "Safeguards"

I must point out that safeguards mean nothing once the breach is made. Name for me any legislation in any country on the VAD/Euthanasia related topic that has resisted erosion of the safeguards, over time. Once the absolute is breached, no safeguard can be guaranteed to stand forever. The absolute, of course, is that there can be no violation of the integrity and protection of human life. Innocent human life cannot be taken. There is an axiom, evident where VAD-style laws have already been in practice for some time, wherever in the world, that "Hard cases make bad law". It is the "hard cases" that have featured in support of the proposed legislation, including the Premier's own life-story, but again, legislating for "hard cases" opens the door to more softening on the law down the road. There is no argument that can prevent it, and every argument will be found to support it. It's the old adage of the 'chink in the armour' or 'the foot in the door' or 'give an inch, take a mile', etc. It is obvious from the fact that there are so many idioms in our language about incremental inroads, that experience over centuries has put it into words.

I have personally felt several times, the emotional strain from 'hard cases', so I am not submitting without understanding.

The second is Palliative Care

Palliative Care has been significantly underfunded, and was again shortfalled in the budget just handed down. This makes one wonder if the government is serious about that option. I was particularly surprised and certainly upset, that the Hospice proposed for my city, Rockhampton, didn't even get a mention that I could find, in the budget.

In short, absolutes on the value and respect of human life serve to protect it from violation; and the idea of 'safeguards' is of short-term effect.

Also, it is a serious abrogation in duty of care to not fund in a satisfactory way, Palliative Care and Hospices, to give patients a real choice in how they wish to face their end days.