

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 1097

Submitted by: [REDACTED]

Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name

Position: I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill

Comments in relation to: The request and assessment process, Oversight and review

Attachments: See attachment


Submitter Comments:



1 July 2020

(Please treat this information as confidential)

Dear Health and Environment Committee members

I am writing this submission regarding the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021, on behalf of my parents  and other elderly people who are not considered terminally ill.



Mum was a long-term member of EXIT and was deeply offended by anyone that suggested that voluntary assisted dying or voluntary euthanasia was anything other than someone (with a sound mind) exercising what she believed was their right to die.

Both my parents signed Advance Health Directives a decade ago but were both concerned that this could be ignored by those health professionals who were morally opposed to this. They had heard too many horror stories of people being resuscitated against their will even with an Advance Health Directive in place.

Mum and Dad did not want to go into an aged care facility because they were fiercely independent. They were also worried about the care they might receive, but this was not the reason for their deaths.

In recent years, Mum and Dad both suffered from ailments that made their daily lives challenging, uncomfortable and painful. Dad suffered from heart disease, cancer, atrial fibrillation, diabetes, and several other issues stemming from a stroke and back surgeries. Mum suffered from atrial fibrillation, glaucoma, and itchy and bruised paper-thin skin. They both complained of nausea. As far as their quality of life went, in their last few months they spent time at home, or with doctors or in hospital and frequently cancelled their social engagements. They had simply had enough.

This Bill, in its current form, does not seem to support the elderly, who are not considered terminally ill despite their age and ailments. This means that elderly people will continue to take their own lives, often dying alone, that will continue to shock and traumatise the unprepared finder.

For people to guarantee quick and painless deaths, they're forced to source an often-illegal substance. Mum told me a story of some of her elderly Gold Coast friends who were raided by the police, in response to request by Australian Border Force. The police demanded they hand over whatever they had to kill themselves. I understand the police are doing their jobs but imagine how terrifying this was for these ladies? On one occasion, one lady gave the police half of what she had, then took her life that night. I asked Mum 'was she planning on doing this?'. Mum said 'no, but she could see her opportunity, slipping away'. How sad. Please note after Mum and Dad's deaths, the police treated our family with respect and compassion.

Another of Mum's friends took her life in 2018, because she was in immense pain - all the time. Her doctor didn't want to prescribe her heavy painkillers and she just couldn't stand the pain anymore. She didn't tell anyone, and she was found by a worker in her retirement village. This worker went on long term stress leave. It would have been a highly distressing discovery, finding a charming resident deceased with a plastic bag over her head.

I think this committee would be shocked to find out the true extent of elderly people 'exiting' under their own terms. But if you are brave enough to ask, I am sure the Coroners Court of Queensland would have this information at their fingertips. Work Cover Queensland would be able to tell you how many people have taken stress leave due to the shock of finding someone dead by their own hand. And it goes on.

I 100 per cent support the intent of this Bill, to permit terminally ill people from ending their lives painlessly and surrounded by their loved ones if they so choose. Equally I support people's rights to stay alive with high quality palliative care should this be their choice.

Mum and Dad welcomed this legislation and I believe they submitted a response during the public consultation phase of this Bill.

Should anyone wish to discuss this further, I would welcome the opportunity.

Kind regards,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the author.