

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 1212
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Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Position: I/We do not support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill
Comments in relation to: Safeguards
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

The debate around euthanasia and similar topics is focussed on limiting suffering.

Good palliative care includes managing unnecessary pain - which could unintentionally result in a quickened death through for example high doses of morphine.

Euthanasia and similar methods offer a quick and easy death through intentional killing. Voluntary assisted dying (VAD) may sound like a form of palliative care – but it is in fact assisted suicide.

Possibly most people have toyed with the idea of suicide at some point in their lives. However, with family or community support, or realising the impact on others, they recognise it is not the best choice.

Yet the “Voluntary Assisted Dying” Bill proposes to legitimise suicide, and to assist in it, when people are most vulnerable – when they have received a 12 month prognosis. As a community we strive to prevent suicide as evidenced by government funding in Qld – so why choose to desert people at their time of greatest need?

We have all heard stories of people in dreadful pain - ‘they shoot horses don’t they’. But people are not horses – they are our parents, children, neighbours and friends. We must prioritise and make available the best possible palliative care to manage such pain – but never to offer deliberate death. After great tragedies of history, we hear “Never again”. We should not want to give power into the hands of doctors, nurses and others to legally kill – no matter how apparently good the intention. In Germany during World War II, government-sanctioned doctors and nurses killed multitudes of innocent people – through the involuntary euthanasia of the disabled, elderly and infirm, who were regarded as “useless eaters”.

You may think this is an extreme example, but the Netherlands and Belgium, which have turned a blind eye to euthanasia since the 1990s, even before it was legalised in 2002, there have been many reported instances of involuntary and non-voluntary euthanasia, even of children.

Let us learn from the lessons of history so that we are not doomed to repeat them.

I implore you – do not support this bill, but rather support the funding of good palliative care which is grossly underfunded in Queensland.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Hunter