

**Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021**

**Submission No.:** 1241  
**Submitted by:** Wade Garrard  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Position:** I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill but recommend some changes to it.  
**Comments in relation to:** Eligibility criteria\*  
**Attachments:** No attachment

**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee,

I would like to make a submission in respect of the eligibility criteria for the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. I am very supportive of the government enacting this legislation as I have experienced first hand the impact that disease has had on my family members over a 3-5 year, prolonged period, before their passing.

The proposed bill notes as part of the eligibility criteria that this is "an option for people at the end of life who are suffering and dying", however the following must be satisfied:

- is advanced, progressive and will cause death
- is expected to cause death within 12 months and
- is causing suffering that the person considers to be intolerable. Whether the person's suffering is intolerable is a subjective assessment by the person themselves. This element of the eligibility criteria is crucial control over who is eligible for the scheme.

I have had two grandparents pass away from dementia, spending the last 3-5 years of their lives in a dementia ward. I currently have one other grandparent in a dementia ward and he has been there for 3 years now. These are individuals who cannot feed themselves, dress themselves, bathe themselves and they are in an immense amount of suffering. Being in this position for a number of years is no way to live.

Given they lack any control or mental capability to do the basics in life, I question how anyone in this position would be able to make such a critical decision in terms of whether their suffering is intolerable or not. They cannot even communicate.

As part of the debate and consultation process for the bill there needs to be significant consultation with family members who have first hand experience in dealing with this shocking disease. It is a disease that can hit very quickly and an individual would not be able to anticipate when they would no longer be able to make an appropriate decision in terms of their life. The bill needs to allow for a person to be able to make a clear assessment and decision to preempt if they ever end up in this unfortunate position. There will obviously need to be very clear circumstances for an individual to be in and clear instructions on, if and when, an individual satisfies their personal circumstances who would be the decision maker (i.e. power of attorney) at this stage to make the decision and approve the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.