

**Health and Environment Committee**

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**From:** Helen Halpin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 7:55 PM  
**To:** Health and Environment Committee  
**Subject:** I oppose the "Voluntary Assisted Dying" Bill

**Categories:** Submission

Re: I oppose the "Voluntary Assisted Dying" Bill

Dear Health Committee Members,

I am writing to express my grave concern of the assisted suicide bill. There are many flaws to this bill that do not safeguard human life through equitable access to palliative care, assess the mental health of patients, or protect those who conscientiously object euthanasia therefore inhibiting a freedom of speech.

Queenslanders with a 12 month prognosis who are over 18 years old would be eligible for euthanasia or assisted suicide, upon the approval of two doctors who don't have to be specialists.

The two approving doctors can be junior General Practitioners with little or no specialised training in end-of-life management.

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

Health institutions whose charter is opposed to euthanasia (i.e. Catholic Health Australia and UnitingCare as well as many others) would be compelled to refer patients who qualify for euthanasia or assisted suicide upon request. In the case where the patient is a permanent resident of a facility, like an aged care home for example, the institution would be forced to let the assisted suicide or euthanasia take place on the premises.

No mental health checks. There is no requirement for those requesting assisted suicide to be assessed by a mental health expert like a psychiatrist.

No requirement for a patient to be seen by a palliative care specialist.

Inequitable access to euthanasia and palliative care. If passed, this law would allow people with a 12 month prognosis to access euthanasia straight away, but they may not be able to access palliative care until a few weeks or a few months before the end of life (and in some cases in regional Queensland they may have no access to palliative care at all). Very concerningly, when Western Australia passed its assisted suicide legislation, an amendment to the Bill which would have given regional WA the same access to palliative care as assisted suicide was voted down.

Trying to talk someone out of assisted suicide could put you in jail for up to 7 years.

Death certificates would be falsified to record their underlying sickness as the cause of death instead of euthanasia.

The Premier also wants "tele-deaths" legalised so people can access assisted suicide via the a mere phone call or over the internet.

A doctor or a nurse can raise the idea of assisted suicide in the context of discussing other end-of-life options.

All of the above show how terribly flawed this bill is. How terribly flawed it is for the ill, the health care workers and society. Any bill that inhibits freedom of speech and lack of true care for the ill, does not represent a democratic nation.

Sincerely,  
Helen Halpin

