



ABN 91 323 005 375

Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

National President
Mrs Carolyn Metcalfe
P.O. Box 6072, Lake Munmorah, NSW 2259

president@cwla.org.au

National Secretary
Mrs Robyn Miller
P.O. Box 2043 Bowral, NSW 2576

secretary@cwla.org.au

**'Open our ears to hear God's word by entrusting ourselves
fully to Him and to believe in His love'**

14 August 2014

Submission to: Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senate Inquiry: Exposure Draft of the Medical Services

(Dying with Dignity) Bill 2014

The Exposure Draft of the Medical Services (Dying with Dignity) Bill 2014 was referred to the Senate on 24 June 2014, with particular reference to the rights of terminally ill people to seek assistance in ending their lives and also an appropriate framework with which to do so.

Statement:

Catholic Women's League Australia Inc. (CWLA) is the national peak body representing the League's six member organisations located throughout Australia. We are a Non-Government Organisation and have consultative (Roster) status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. We are also a member organisation of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations.

With a membership of almost 5,000 and representatives in every state in Australia, we recognise our right and responsibility to express views on matters of public policy.

We also recognise, as a Christian organisation within a democratic society, of a person's right to 'die with dignity', but this does not include deliberately killing another human being.

"Medical Services" pertain to live persons and there is a great difference between purposely killing someone and allowing a person to die peacefully with dignity.

Rationale:

- Surveys consistently show the majority of doctors oppose any change in the law, including Australian Medical Association, New Zealand Medical Association, British Medical Association, Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Medical Practitioners.
- Physician-assisted suicide is contrary to the Hippocratic Oath, the Declaration of Geneva, the International Code of Medical Ethics.

Additional Information:

Since euthanasia was legalised in the Netherlands in 2002, a former advocate and University of Utrecht academic, Professor Theo Boer, recently stated that it is “on the way to becoming a default mode of dying for cancer patients”.

In mid-July, as peers in the House of Lords in the UK, prepared to debate the *Assisted Dying Bill*, promoted by a Lord Falconer, Professor Boer urged them “don’t make our mistake” and warned of a “slippery slope” to mass deaths. He further advised that assisted deaths have increased by approximately 15% every year since 2008 and the number could reach a record 6,000 by the end of 2014.

The medical profession in Australia should certainly not be pressured into the taking of life by this “Exposure Draft of the Medical Services (Dying with Dignity) Bill 2014”.

Euthanasia is illegal in Australia and should remain illegal.

The CWLA strongly opposes any change to these laws.

Angela Devlin
Delegate for the Catholic Women’s League of Australia Inc)

