



Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

30 Aug 2021

Dear Committee Secretary

I am a lawyer and legal philosopher at the Australian Centre for Health Law Research at QUT, where I currently hold the position of Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law.

I write to express support for the Bill. The Bill proposes the removal of limitations on the Northern Territory Parliament's power to acquire property, to make laws conferring powers in relation to hearing and determining employment disputes, and to make laws in respect of voluntary assisted dying. I support all these proposals.

However, there is an alternative proposal that this Bill fails to consider: the removal of the Commonwealth veto power only in relation Voluntary Assisted Dying, which is a matter of personal conscience.

Matters of personal conscience are matters of personal morality, about which people can reasonably disagree. Voluntary assisted dying falls into this category.

To the extent that the Federal Parliament vetoes Northern Territory laws on personal moral matters, it abuses its political power by substituting its own moral judgement for that of Northern Territorians on matters over which there is legitimate political debate.

For this reason, the power to veto such laws should be removed. Section 50A of the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978*, and the *Euthanasia Laws Act 1997*, should therefore be repealed. The people of the Northern Territory should have the right to decide these matters for themselves through their own parliament, without having the views of a different parliament forced on them. This argument may not apply in the same way to the other two matters in the Bill.

I close by emphasising a point that is highlighted in the second reading speech. This submission is not about supporting voluntary assisted dying. Rather, it is about supporting the right of Northern Territorians to make up their own minds about this contested issue, free from the political interference of a separate parliament. It is, in short, a submission about political justice.

With best wishes

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