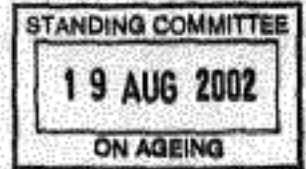


SUMMARY

- A. The issue of voluntary euthanasia.
- B. The financial status of superannuated women.



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Standing Committee on Ageing  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

I wish to make the following submission to the House of Representatives Committee on Ageing.

I am a self-funded retiree of modest income and assets, a single woman aged 77 years living alone in my own home. Two issues are of concern to me and I would be pleased if the Committee could take into consideration these matters during their discussions.

The first issue is that of voluntary euthanasia which to me is a matter of freedom of choice and therefore the democratic right of every Australian faced with hopeless illness who wishes to die with dignity. It would seem from various published polls and research that, like myself, the majority of Australians support changes to existing laws concerning voluntary euthanasia and related issues. Certainly no-one of my acquaintance does not support the need for changes to present legislation.

The second issue of concern to me is that of the financial status of superannuated women like myself who never achieved equal pay for equal work during their working lives and therefore did not receive equal superannuation benefits.

As women tend to live longer than men, during the next 40 years there can be little doubt that some superannuated women will experience financial restraints on their quality of life in old age because of past inequalities of salary payment in the workplace.

Therefore, with respect, I ask that consideration be given by the Committee to an extension of the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card so that lower income superannuants may receive the same concessions which are presently granted to holders of the Aged Pensioner Concession Card.

It is perhaps timely to acknowledge here that superannuants of my generation contributed to Social Security funds through a compulsory levy from 1945 to 1951. These contributions were paid into the National Welfare Fund which was wound up in 1976 without direct benefit to those who had contributed to the Fund.

Home care of the elderly by family members is no longer the norm in Australian society, therefore issues which now trouble the elderly will continue to be of major concern to the aged during the next 40 years.

The first concern of the aged is how they will die and the second is how they will pay for quality health care before they die.

The legal availability of voluntary euthanasia as an option for those who choose to die with dignity would be of immense comfort to the aged faced with hopeless illness as would be the secure knowledge that they will have the ability to fund quality health care before death overtakes them.

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