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**Sent:** Monday, 17 March 2008 3:25 PM

**To:** Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)

**Subject:** Submission to the inquiry into Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008

I would like to express support for Bob Brown's Bill for an Act to repeal the Euthanasia Laws Act 1997 (Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2008).

I want the peace of mind that the legal option of voluntary euthanasia would give me, should I ever become terminally ill. I believe it is my life and I should have the right to determine when I have had enough. The prospect of becoming totally dependent on others is of great concern to me.

I have witnessed the suffering of an elderly and ill friend, forced to endure the indignity of a vegetable-like existence in a nursing home. When she caught pneumonia she begged to be allowed to die, but was carted off to hospital against her will. Her life was "saved" by medical intervention - which just meant she had to go back into the nursing home again and repeat the whole experience twice more before she finally died. She longed for a peaceful, painless death, but that was simply not allowed.

I would rather die than go through the same experience myself. Should I find myself sick, suffering, and completely powerless in the hands of an institution, I would consider my life unbearable.

I would like to have the choice of asking for help to die. A doctor should be allowed to help me, without fear of breaking the law.

The legal right to die with dignity is available to citizens of The Netherlands, Belgium, Oregon in the United States, Israel and Albania. Assisted suicide has been legal since 1918 in Switzerland. It's about time it was legal in Australia.

Linda Stewart

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