

1<sup>st</sup> April

I make this submission re Senator Bob Brown's *Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008*. This bill, currently being considered by a Senate Committee, aims to overturn the 1997 Federal ban on euthanasia in the Northern Territory, effectively allowing Territory governments in both the Northern Territory and the ACT to impose euthanasia on their vulnerable citizens. This potentially would open the door for 'death tourism' as well.

The reality is that, if overseas evidence is any guide, no matter what safeguards are promised and guaranteed, voluntary euthanasia exploits particularly the vulnerable sick and elderly and inevitably leads to involuntary euthanasia. To legalise killing in the name of compassion is to cross an ethical barrier that should never be crossed.

Of course Senator Brown portrays the Bill as a fundamental restoration of Territory rights rather than as unpalatable euthanasia. Interestingly though, Northern Territory politicians themselves are among the fiercest critics of Bob Brown's bill. Even Chief Minister Paul Henderson, who as a private citizen back in 1995 was in favour of euthanasia, says he'd have to seriously reconsider whether he'd support it today. He said recently that 'the public policy and the debate that we had in the parliaments here back in 1995 around how we as a Northern Territory care for our terminally ill patients is a totally different debate in 2008 than it was in 1995' adding that 'for Bob Brown to introduce legislation on such a sensitive subject in the Federal Parliament without any consultation with the people of the Northern Territory is arrogance of quite breathtaking proportions'.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Dolan