

Submission on repeal of *Euthanasia Laws Act 1997*

Civil Liberties Australia supports repeal of this Act on two fundamental grounds:

- the right of an individual to decide whether and when to end his or her life

CLA regards the decision on living as the absolute prerogative – the right, or the civil liberty – of the person. An individual right to life implies an individual right to death.

As well, an overwhelming majority of Australians support the concept of voluntary euthanasia (with appropriate legislative protection, as in the thwarted NT Act). Parliamentarians have a primary responsibility to represent the views of their electors when they are so clearly expressed by such a significant majority as on this issue.

In summary, people should be free to decide their own personal destiny without imposing their beliefs on others. In a democracy, minority opinion is respected: individuals or movements who do not believe in euthanasia will be under no compulsion to change their beliefs, or their practices.

- the equal right of all Australian electors to have their parliaments enact valid laws

It was completely unacceptable when valid laws enacted by the democratically-elected Australian Parliament could be overturned by UK legislation and/or by decisions of the Privy Council. Over time, these anomalies were removed.

It is equally unacceptable that valid laws of a democratically-elected State Parliament could be overturned by the Australian Parliament. They can't be.

It is therefore equally unacceptable that the laws of a democratically-elected Territory parliament, created validly, could be overturned by the Australian Parliament.

Such actions make a mockery of the rights of citizens living in the Territories, and make them second-class Australian citizens in relation to the fuller democratic rights held by citizens of Australian States. The Australian Parliament has a clear responsibility to correct this inequality of rights between its citizens. All Australians should have equal rights.

CLA strongly supports repeal of the *Euthanasia Laws Act 1997*.

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26 March 2008 *I give permission for this submission to go on the Senate L&C Committee website*