

Committee Secretary,
 Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
 Department of the Senate
 Parliament House
 Canberra, ACT 2600
 Australia

Submission Re: Inquiry into the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008

I write on behalf of the members of the CWL of Victoria & Wagga Wagga Inc. We wish to state that we **totally oppose** this Bill.

While proponents of the Bill see euthanasia as a way to avoid distress and horrific pain under the guise of ‘dying with dignity’, once again we are confronted with the obfuscation of the language to pull at the heart strings of people to achieve their aim.

Today, the advances in Palliative Care allow the pain and suffering associated with terminal illnesses to be effectively managed. Palliative Care is about ‘dying with dignity’; euthanasia is not.

Any law which allows a group of people – in this case physicians - the right to kill or assist in the killing of fellow human beings is a **‘bad law’**.

Senator Bob Brown, who introduced this Bill to the Senate stated on ABC’s AM 6/2/08 that “it’s been proven that in countries where euthanasia is allowed, it isn’t often applied’. It is obvious that the Senator has not kept up to date with what is happening on the international scene.

In 2005 (latest figures available) there were 12,666 reported intentionally caused euthanasia deaths in the Netherlands. Of these 9685 were by terminal sedation and a further 550 deaths resulted from ending of life without explicit request.

On 2/4/08 a report stated that Doctors in the Netherlands regularly **fail** to observe the Euthanasia Law. Many do not even state ‘euthanasia as the reason for death’ on death certificates.

Recent government-funded research found that Dutch nurses participate in 1 out of 8 cases of euthanasia which is illegal under the Law. The research also showed that Dutch nurses have few reservations about euthanasia. Sadly they are the ones who generally discuss this option with patients first.

Under current Belgium Euthanasia Law, patients have to be less than 12 months old or over 18 years to qualify for euthanasia. There is now a move to extend this benefit to teenagers and to older people who suffer with such severe dementia that they are unable to make their own medical decision (*a benefit to whom....governments for economical reasons!*).

The late Dutch euthanasia opponent, Dr. Karl Gunning stated: “Once killing is seen as the answer to one problem, it soon becomes the answer to 100”. The Netherlands and the Belgium Laws prove him to be correct.

The Bill which Senator Bob Brown wishes to resurrect is full of holes and is open to abuses. Therefore if this Bill is passed who will be listed on an amended Bill in a few years time?

Will it be?

- The aged and infirm!
- Those who have no say in the matter except relatives who can't stand the sight of someone suffering!
- Those with HIV and AIDS!
- Those with disabilities!
- Trauma accident patients!(why waste money trying to save these people)
- Those babies under 12 months who fit Peter Singer's category!

Eugenics already takes care of the child in the womb who is diagnosed with a disability.

On December 7th, 2008 we will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration was agreed to by Australia and nations world wide. There is nothing in this Declaration or for that matter any other UN Declaration, Treaty or Convention that promotes the killing of people. Euthanasia is not and can never be a 'human right'.

As we approach ANZAC Day we need to ask the questions.... Was euthanasia the so called 'freedom' our young men fought and died for during the war? The answer is NO. They died to save us from the 'culture of death'. Is euthanasia in the ANZAC Spirit? We think not.

"True forms of government are those in which one governs with a view to the common good, but governments which rule with a view to private interest.....are perversions".

Aristotle-Politics, Book 2.

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