

Dear Sir,

I am writing to support the report that Senator Bob Brown will be introducing a bill with regards to treatment of the terminally ill. I consider that I can speak with greater awareness than most people as I am a retired Medical Practitioner who was a District Medical Officer in Tasmania based in Swansen on the East Coast. My practice covered approximately 2,000 patients and was spread over 90 miles of unsealed roads. There was no pharmacist within the area so I was which was officially described as a Dispensing doctor. Sick patients living north of Swansen were referred to Launceston South of Swansen they went to Hobart. My nearest medical colleague was 45 miles away at Campbelltown in the State, Midlands.

Two instances that I recall were patients diagnosed in the major hospitals with cancer with multiple secondary deposits. Once diagnosed by Radiography and exploratory they would be sent home to my care if they requested to be permitted to die at home. This happened in 2 instances where the patients were friends as well as being members of the local community. The residents in the major hospitals would have little knowledge of the isolation relative to practices such as mine + often they would be sent home without their regular medications (a diabetic without his injectable insulin). They would have no narcotics even if they were in severe pain. One a man who I had played golf with frequently was one of these. He had multiple bony secondaries which can be extremely painful. When I was called to him he was in extreme pain yet had no Codeine tablets. He was screaming in agony. He greeted me with 'Roy, You are my friend Help me.' I did, I gave him a fairly heavy dose of morphine. I then rang his surgeon who told me that he had cancer of the stomach and would probably be dead within a week. After due consideration I returned to the patient + told him 'I would be treating him as I had been taught in my hospital. If the dose does not control the pain Double it.' Was he happy with that he said 'Yes give me a good nights sleep' I doubled the dose. He slept well, + I signed his certificate as 'due to Ca Stomach'. In similar circumstances I would follow the same procedure.

We are entitled to die peacefully and with dignity.

As a Stud Horse breeder I would not let my horses suffer to that extent. I assisted 2 other patients at their request. One an 80yr old ha but sore over her sacrum larger than my hand. She had prepared a brew in sherry for the time when she felt she had had enough. She asked a nurse to ring me and ask that I bring in her special sherry. We usually drink sherry together on Wednesday afternoon. We drink our own sherry for the last time I was aware that she had told her family that this was to happen. A month later I was invited to a meal with her family + friends. I was not aware of any special significance but one of the part told my wife it was a thank you gesture. She had dealt with dignity.

Sincerely Roy Kolbfench Please let Bob Brown see this letter