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**Mr Peter Hallam
Secretary
The Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
The Parliament
Commonwealth of Australia
Canberra**

**RE: Inquiry into the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws
Repeal) Bill 2008**

I wish to make a private submission to the inquiry as I am very concerned about the ramifications of a proposed bill to repeal the Euthanasia Laws Act which was introduced and voted for as recently as 1997. I have been in private practice for over 40 years and have been a medical educator of undergraduate and postgraduate medical practitioners for 34 years. The issue of palliative care and caring for the terminally ill pervades our education and practice.

On the issue of euthanasia it is appropriate to quote from my text book which is the most used textbook by doctors in Australasia

"It should be an uncommon experience to be confronted with a request for euthanasia, especially as the media clichés of 'extreme suffering' and 'agonising death' are rarely encountered in the context of attentive whole person continuing care. The non-use of inappropriate life support systems, the use of 'round the clock morphine, cessation of cytotoxic drugs, the use of ancillary drugs such as antidepressants and antiemetics, various nerve blocks and loving care almost always helps the terminally ill patient to cope without undue pain and suffering"

Our educational objectives are to foster good medicine with appropriate standards of caring, responsibility and ethical standards. In ethical issues we are influenced by the Hippocratic Oath and in modern times by the Declaration of Geneva in our respect for human life.

I believe that doctors work very well under the current laws and modus operandi in this country. General practitioners in particular have a difficult task compounded by a manpower problem as the discipline is now less attractive with over regulation and working in an increasingly aggressive society.

The proposed law has considerable ethical and moral implications for what is a sensitive and emotional issue. I do not believe that we need to be promulgating laws which place doctors under additional pressure. Such a law will create a mind set in patients, their family and the community that there are easy options for the terminally ill. Basically the practice of euthanasia or assisted suicide is anathema to our calling.

I would like to see preservation of the status quo as a more acceptable framework in which to practice medicine

Yours sincerely

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