

Submission on the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008

I am a 68 year old woman in excellent health and I support the restoration of the 1995 Northern Territory legislation which established the right of a terminally ill person to request assistance from a medically qualified person to voluntarily terminate his or her life in a humane manner.

When the federal government made its decision in 1997 to overturn the Territory right-to-die laws, it did not take into account the fact that voluntary euthanasia was supported by around 75% of the population. This support, according to more recent research, has now risen to around 85%, which is a huge majority of the population.

Voluntary euthanasia is a matter of personal choice that many people are already making, or are planning to make when the quality of their lives becomes so poor that life is not worth living. However, obtaining the right drugs in Australia, or traveling to Switzerland to die under their laws, or traveling to Mexico for drugs is impossible for many aged people to undertake. And nor should we have to!

Since the Euthanasia Laws Act (Andrews Act) was passed 1997, other countries have adopted assisted suicide laws. This means that there is a body of evidence building up to disprove the many "slippery slope" claims that are made by opponents of legally assisted death.

The Australian Territories - the NT, ACT and Norfolk Island - should have the same democratic rights as the rest of us living in States. Had the NT law been enacted democratically in a State, the Federal Government would not have been able to repeal it.

Dorothy Cora