

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

This legislation deserves the full support of Parliamentarians for the following reasons:

- All research concerning public support for voluntary euthanasia shows that the great majority of Australian (generally between 70 and 80 per cent of those sampled) are in favour of humane and compassionate legislation enabling the suffering to end their lives peacefully and with dignity.
- Such legislation, with all the appropriate safeguards, is advanced by those who have compassion for those who are suffering, sometimes with unbearable and unrelievable pain. By implication, those who oppose such legislation lack compassion. No other conclusion is possible.
- Voluntary euthanasia is requested by the sufferer, not forced upon them. On the other hand, the opposition to such requests forces suffering upon those wishing to be relieved of it.
- Nobody and no legislation forces those who wish to die 'naturally' (without any action to hasten death) from doing so. If a legislator, for example, wants to let nature take its course, no matter what excruciating circumstances surround him or her (sometimes for weeks, months or years) this legislation allows that legislator to experience the suffering. But why should a legislator force others to experience such suffering against their will?
- Various arguments have been put forward by those opposing voluntary euthanasia. We hear of 'slippery slope', 'elderly taken advantage of', 'possibility of abuse' and so on. Let us be honest: such arguments do not hold up under scrutiny, nor do they hold up when good laws are examined in their practice. In short, such arguments are baloney. The evidence world wide refutes these arguments and reveals them to be what they are—moralistic attempts to impose on others the religious values of the arguer. They have no place in our secular governance.
- Properly and carefully crafted legislation, such as the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act that was practiced successfully in the Northern Territory during part of the 1990s, enables compassionate medical people to assist suffering patients to die with dignity and releases them from both the fear and the experience of unrelievable pain and humiliation.