

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE RIGHTS OF THE TERMINALLY ILL BILL. 2008

The 1997 the Andrews Act was remarkable in overturning the Northern Territory's The Rights of the Terminally Ill Act. The territory law founded on the will of the people was expressed in a parliament of the nation.

We agree with Bob Brown's Rights of the Terminally Ill repeal bill of the Andrews Act on two counts: firstly that the ROTI bill gives the provision for people who are terminally ill to have the option of ending their lives, and secondly because it respects the right of the people of the Northern Territory to make their own laws for themselves as they see fit.

The VESNSW (ACT Branch) has as its aim the support of a right for the terminally ill to seek to end their life when pain becomes unbearable and there is no reasonable hope of cure. There are many in the community who would seek a wider right to end life at the terminal stage. According to a poll conducted last year by the VES NSW eighty percent of Australians support a right to voluntary euthanasia. It is virtually certain that the proportion among older people is higher; and as the people most concerned their view should have force. **The time has come for our elected representatives to start to take account of these facts.**

Bob Brown's Rights of the Terminally Ill repeal bill also draws attention to the fact that the constitution allows the Federal Parliament to make laws for the territories. The constitution is an old fashioned document which many would agree badly needs amending in many ways. From the point of view of those living in the territories the exercise of the constitutional law at times when the Federal parliament arbitrarily chooses is an insult. It undermines territorians right to make laws which they believe to be appropriate for them. It makes a mockery of their democratic rights.

If the Federal parliament agrees with this bill it will indicate that it recognizes the rights of people in the territories to make their own laws and it will also indicate that it recognizes that the community in general supports voluntary euthanasia. I urge the Federal Parliament to repeal the Andrews Act and support the Rights of the terminally Ill (Euthanasia Law Repeal) Bill 2008.

Jeanne Arthur