

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into End of Life Choices

Mrs Susan Strickland

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**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Dear Committee members,

As an aging Australian I am writing to implore you to have the courage and compassion to advocate for changes to the current laws regarding end of life choices. I have been an ardent supporter of voluntary euthanasia for nearly 30 years – a passion which began after visiting an elderly aunt in a nursing home. She was nearly blind, often sick and in pain, and had both legs amputated above the knee. This previously dignified and independent lady was now dependent on others for her most basic needs, had no quality of life, and no hope that it would ever get better. She would weep and say, “I’ve had enough”, and each night would pray not to wake up next morning. Why is it considered inhumane to let a pet suffer needlessly, and yet the terminally ill are not entitled to the same dignified and pain-free death?

I beg the committee to pay unannounced visits to the less upmarket hospitals and nursing homes (which is where the majority of us will end up), and picture yourselves in that situation. Is this how you want to end your days? Is this the last memories you want your loved ones to have of you?

When quality of life is negligible and death is inevitable, I see nothing ennobling about struggling on to the bitter end. The thought of spending my last months in excruciating pain, dependent on someone to wipe my backside, and being kept alive by invasive and artificial means fills me with horror. Dying with Dignity is not compulsory, and physician-assisted dying is not about ending life – simply about ending suffering. By all means put in place safeguards to protect the vulnerable, but for those of us capable of making rational and informed choices, Please, Please GIVE US THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE.