

From: [dewilson](#)
To: [LSIC](#)
Subject: Inquiry into End of Life Choices
Date: Monday, 27 July 2015 12:05:51 PM

Legislative Council Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues

INQUIRY INTO END OF LIFE CHOICES

Submission by (Mr.) Darryl Raymond Wilson of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Although I am not a voting resident of Victoria, the Victorian Legislative Council's Standing Committee inquiry into the end of life issues that potentially face us all is of great interest to me because I am a citizen of Australia and of the world.

Like every person who has passed "three score and ten", I have seen many more people suffer than anyone would want to.

Every one of those people were somebody's parent, sibling, child, relative, close friend or neighbour.

My own life experience is that I lost my father when I was 14, he was ill all of my conscious memory and I don't know whether he would have chosen a more dignified and less painful existence if he had the choice. Morphine and oxygen cylinders were a seemingly constant presence in his life. I lost my eldest brother from lung cancer when I was 32 and again I don't know whether he would have chosen a more dignified and less painful last chapter of his life had he been afforded a choice.

I lost my mother when I was 41 and she had suffered for many years with almost intolerable pain, resulting in her being completely dependent on pain minimising drugs to the point where upon her death, we discovered that she had virtually simultaneous prescriptions from five different doctors. My mother converted to Catholicism about 8 years before her death and without ever having discussed the matter with her, I feel that her Catholic beliefs would not have allowed her to choose an alternate to the way that she died.

My younger brother died about 12 years after my mother and whilst his was the only death in my nuclear family that was not prolonged, his passing left me, at too young an age, as the sole surviving member of my childhood family.

This, of course happens to many people, but it made me feel very lonely indeed, even though I had (and still have) my own wife and children.

I am not sure of what instructions I would leave for my family in respect of relief from any suffering in the final phase of my life, like most people, I have (despite my own family experience) shied away from the issue. But I am certain, that if such a time comes, I would much prefer to be able to make a choice, or have my family make it for me if that were appropriate, rather than have authorities continue to proclaim that we do not have any choice, because that is the choice that they have made.

I am sure that there isn't a soul on earth that would not seek to diminish individual suffering, irrespective whether the sufferer is known to them or otherwise.

The primary issue that I believe your committee to be considering is a matter of basic human rights.

This nation is committed to the principle that every person should be free to live and breathe in a society that respects their individuality and their right to choose their religion and their right to their privacy.

This nation defends its citizens' right to be free from prejudice and their rights to an education and to medical treatment. We have fought wars to enable citizens of other countries to be able to make free choices about their lives.

There seems to me to be only two fundamental rights that are now denied to Australian citizens, the right to have their chosen life partner recognised as such (and I hope and believe that this denial will soon be removed) and the final right for a person of sound mind who has been properly counselled to make their own final determination if they desire so to do.

Continuing the reference to same sex marriages, it is obviously clear to any thinking person that should anyone contemplate such a union, it is of no greater impact on general society than a heterosexual marriage. Similarly, the final choice of an individual should be of no great importance to anyone but themselves and those that they love and who loves them.

What is of paramount importance to the rest of our society (in both the cases) is that properly advised people of sound mind should be able to make the choice – it is the ability to make a choice that is the fundamental here, not the outcome of an individual choice.

I am aware that any decision made by the Victorian Parliament will not have force in other parts of Australia, but it seems that from emancipation onwards, the essential rights of Australian citizens have been established progressively throughout our country because on every such occasion one single state had the fortitude and compassion to be the first.

I have no doubt that the Victorian Parliament has the opportunity to correct an injustice not just for their own constituents, but also in so doing, make it sooner rather than later for the rest of us to have the same freedom of choice. I very much hope that the honourable members of the Parliament realise this!

I don't ask any person or authority to approve of "legalised suicide", I urge the committee members to recognise that they are not being asked to grant a right to people, they are actually being asked to end the denial to every one of their citizens, of the right of self-determination.

Sincerely
Darryl Wilson