

Submission on the Adequacy of Victorian Laws in Meeting People's Expectations Regarding Options Availability at the End of Their Life

To:- Legal & Social Issues Committee

Parliament House

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I fully support voluntary euthanasia as it is a right to choose to die with dignity. At present it is not legal and I would like to have it legalized in the same way as it is legal in Holland or Switzerland.

I am 85 years old and have lived through the war and witnessed its horror.

My mother was diagnosed with bowel cancer, she has undergone several operations and was very sick and in pain for 2 years and for the last year of her life I looked after her. She went through horrendous suffering. Also my sister died from bone marrow cancer, she was in palliative care for a long time. At the very end of her life I was allowed to stay with her in hospital. The nursing staff in the palliative care was very compassionate and caring to my sister and even found time to look after me and help me deal with the horror of what was happening to her. I have decided then that palliative care is not for me as it is like a prolonged euthanasia.

I now suffer from pulmonary hypertension and chronic pain from a benign tumor that cannot be operated on. I have direction in my living will not to have my life artificially prolonged; however I would like to be able to end my life peacefully.

I know that suicide is not against the law and that in spite of the illegality of voluntary euthanasia, people take their life when they decide to do so. Two of my friends killed themselves by going under a train and another used car exhaust gas to kill herself and, of course, one can always hang oneself.

As all of these methods are inhumane and, especially in the case of going under a train, have lasting psychological effects on other people that are involved like the driver and passengers of the train. They also means that one needs to end one's life before one would like to do so.

That is why I appeal to the Committee to recommend that voluntary euthanasia modeled on the Dutch one, or the one that was legal for a short time in the Northern Territory, be legalized in Victoria.

Barbara Pelczynska