

To Ms Lilian Topic, Secretary Legal and Social Issues Committee Parliament House,
Spring Street, Melbourne, Vic 3002

With much concern I write about my wish not to end my life like a vegetable and/or lingering for years.. I worry that I want quality of life to the end—not life for the sake of keeping me alive. I stress that if I had an incurable or terminal medical condition, I do not want to be kept alive artificially and I do not want starvation or prolonged unrelieved suffering. No way do I want to survive with tubes, wires, monitors or to be fed artificially or unnaturally. I worry that I will not have my wishes fulfilled and respected at the end of my life.

Greg one of my best mates was also his dad George's best friend. When George was in his 80's, he still loved a beer and a punt with his Greg. George lost interest in life when he told Greg of his increasing embarrassment due to his worsening lack of control of his bowels and urination. George died soon after. Greg lived alone at Dunolly after a good job in Melbourne, and held a DVA gold card for being a soldier in Vietnam. Greg got cancer and got the best treatments known at the time. Later Greg saw his Melbourne specialist, who told him his cancer had returned, and that his quality health time was limited, and medically, nothing more could be done for him. That same day, Greg drove back to Dunolly, rang the Maryborough police to say his health was bugged quoting his specialist report that day. Importantly Greg didn't want his mates to find him after doing himself in with a gun as soon as he put the phone down. The police couldn't change his mind, and they rushed to the scene to find Greg dead.

As a taxi driver myself in the Maryborough region for over 15 years I transport many elderly citizens. Mostly the astute elderly from aged care and nursing homes, I reckon nearly 50% of them tell me "they don't want to be on this earth anymore, and no one takes them seriously".

Our Medical Treatment Act includes doctors role as relieving patients of pain and suffering, but if that relief of pain or suffering means a deathly dose of medication, the medical profession rarely give enough because of the poor legislation that they clearly feel does not protect them. **Our animal laws are better than our human laws** because owners incur a severe penalty when animals in their care endure unrelieved suffering from pain or starvation, and animals can be legally removed from negligent owners.

Australian Bureau of Statistics tell us 86% of all voters in Australia WANT THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE a dignified death. It seems SO WRONG that minority groups good at pen-pushing, and organising mass mail, have shown their power by over riding the publicised majority of voters true voice. Why do our politicians not reflect voters publicised views on these vital social and legal issues, and strive to establish appropriate law?

If a referendum was held on these issues, I feel a clear majority would vote for the right to choose terminal medication in unrelieved prolonged suffering situations.

"Half-baked" attempts to end a life can result in disastrous outcomes -terrifying for those involved, and those who pick up the pieces after. Perhaps contributing is a lack of faith in our medical and legal systems.

Please consider the permanent emotional scarring of those witnessing, supporting and the front line carers of loved ones and fellow citizens (the defenceless) not receiving relief from their ongoing dreadful pain, when refused their coherent reasonable request for a dignified death.

Please help us? I am a baby-boomer-or in the-"catching-pen" for inevitable death. Please give us and future generations, the right to control our end of life choices with protection under new appropriate law?