



28th August, 2015.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to the ~~leg~~ Legal + Social Affairs Committee in response to the calling of submissions from the public to the 'Inquiry into End of Life Choices'.

First of all let me state that I am not in favour of any changes to the law that would allow assisted suicide or euthanasia. I am aware of

cases in Australia where ~~z~~ such a change was made in the Northern Territory.

At least one, maybe more, of the people who were 'assisted' to die were suffering depression and not from any terminal illness. I am familiar with depression in my own family and can understand how people with a depressive condition can come to think that death is a 'good' option. This is just one of the examples of the 'slippery slope' argument

for not changing the law. Overseas, particularly Belgium + Holland, euthanasia has been extended to children and others with mental illness, against (or without) their permission. I recall the debates 10 or 20

years ago where there were many comments about 'safeguards' being included in euthanasia law to prevent these things happening. It is clear that no 'safeguards' have worked. I am aware of the wonderful work provided by hospices where patients receive pain management and are looked after in a way that preserves their dignity. Getting old, frail, bodies wearing out, etc are all a part of life. Death is inevitable.

P.T.O.

WITNESS
I believe that a person's final years should be accepted and not swept away in a rush. These can be a time for reflection, passing on wisdom, apologising for past hurts and reconciliation. It is also a wonderful opportunity to express thanks for the care that our elderly parents gave us as children, and later in our lives.

I believe that we should direct medical efforts into researching and providing better, dignified care for those with disabilities in the last years of their lives.

These people are among the most vulnerable in our society. And a society is measured on how it cares for those who are most vulnerable. I am also against the withdrawing of basic necessities like food + water in order to hasten death. This was done to a long-term patient, Terri Schiavo, in the USA years ago.

This is not just a theoretical or philosophical opinion that I am expressing. I have had experience in my own family and have seen and spent time with relatives who had terminal illnesses. I have visited people in hospices and been privileged to speak with patients in their final days.

Please do not make any changes, or weaken our laws in any way that would allow this practice (euthanasia/assisted suicide) to be practiced in Victoria.

Yours Sincerely, David Cutler.