



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

Ms Bec Cody MLA (Chair), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Tara Cheyne MLA,
Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA.

Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

Submission Number: 233

Date Authorised for Publication: 29/3/18

From: Herman van de Brug
To: [LA Committee - EOLC](#)
Subject: Submission to the Select Committee on End of Life Choices in the ACT, Legislative Committee for the ACT
Date: Thursday, 15 March 2018 4:39:49 PM
Importance: High

Select Committee on End of Life Choices in the ACT	Herman van de Brug
Legislative Committee for the ACT	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Kaleen ACT 2617 [REDACTED]

Dear Committee

Risks to Individuals, the Depressed, the Disabled, the Elderly Undermines Suicide prevention in the Community

I am strongly opposed to the proposed action of the ACT Legislative Assembly in this area for reasons including the following –

- the AMA and many doctors and allied health professionals in Australia are opposed to it. I urge the Assembly to listen to the professionals
- a doctor's diagnosis of a person's life expectancy may be wrong. One of the reasons for opposing capital punishment is that if a person ends up being wrongly convicted, society would be ending the life of an innocent person
- overseas experience has shown that after legislation the categories of people eligible for euthanasia or assisted suicide are often expanded
- I have indirect experience of the system of euthanasia or assisted suicide operating in the Netherlands. My late aunt, [REDACTED] was in charge of a hospital in Groningen and later in Enschede. She confided to me that the system is often abused and that the Netherlands would have been better off not to have gone in this direction
- no matter what safeguards are put in place, interested parties will find a way around them. Legislating in this area will also give people intending to benefit from situations such of these an avenue to explore and over time, as case studies build, more ideas circumvent the procedures
- people may feel pressured to give up their lives, so as not to be a burden on family/friends/caregivers. People with reducing cognitive ability or advancing dementia are particularly vulnerable
- euthanasia or assisted suicide is unnecessary in the ACT – palliative care already effectively meets end of life needs. I am sure once it is realised that a patient is fully dependent on life support systems and there is absolutely no way a patient's situation will improve, as observed over a period of time, after very careful and serious consideration of the person's situation by those treating him/her and some consultation/full briefing to the patient's family/friends/caregivers, life support systems are switched off. I am sure we have all had experiences of this nature. A form of euthanasia or assisted suicide is therefore already in place.
- although I appreciate that religious values have less weight these days, even though our whole system of government is based on Judaeo-Christian principles, I urge Christian members of the Assembly to respect the fact that only God gives life and takes it away, and to encourage fellow Assembly members to show the same respect for life.

In conclusion, I urge the Assembly to note the above arguments and oppose the introduction of euthanasia or assisted suicide by the medical profession in the ACT.

Yours sincerely

Herman van de Brug

NOTE - I would be happy for my submission to be made public but with my name included only, not with my address and contact details. If that is not possible, please keep it confidential.