



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

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Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

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To:

The Committee Secretary

Select Committee on End of Life Choices in the ACT

I am writing to express my strong support of legislation in favour of voluntary assisted dying being enacted in the ACT, and therefore of every effort being made to repeal the Federal legislation that presently prevents such legislation in the ACT and other Federal territories.

The work of Andrew Denton in his recent book *The Damage Done* (2016) and the associated podcast series *Better Off Dead* has eloquently demonstrated the need for legislation in Australia which will:

1. enable people to seek and obtain assistance in exercising their right to choose when, where and in what circumstances they wish to die;
2. give people the peace of mind that comes from knowing that such assistance will be available if they should need it, and thereby
3. obviate the need to attempt suicide in isolation and typically by crude and painful methods, rather than face an unacceptable and otherwise unavoidable degradation of quality of life; and
4. provide legal safeguards for those authorised by the individual concerned to provide the assistance sought.

I commend the Victorian government on having had the courage to legislate for voluntary assisted dying; however, as I understand it the terms of that legislation are very restrictive, and likely to substantially limit its capacity to fulfill the above goals. If and when the ACT becomes able to legislate for itself in this matter, I would urge it to assess the Victorian model in the context of the experience of other regimes in Europe and North America, to find the most effective safeguards of the human rights of our society and the individuals who comprise it.

Yours respectfully,

Geoffrey M. Millar

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