



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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**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

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**From:** marion harris  
**To:** [LA Committee - EOLC](#)  
**Subject:** brief submission  
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Dear Inquiry

I am a medical oncologist at Monash Health in Victoria . I have worked in medical oncology for over twenty years .

I am very upset and saddened that Victoria has by a few votes in the Upper House passed assisted dying laws. I hope that a change of government will ensure that the bill is NEVER enacted.

I urge the ACT NOT to legalise VAD .

While I am a Victorian I am also Australian so I am concerned about my fellow Australians in ACT .

IN short such legislation is too risky .

It puts the desire and so called CHOICE of a very small minority of people to access VAD ABOVE the needs of a greater majority of people who need protection from possible wrongful deaths . These groups include the elderly, the chronically ill, the vulnerable, the disabled . In the real world it is totally naïve to think that the vulnerable can be protected from harm with this legislation .

Elder abuse is real and growing and is undertaken by close relatives . Society already devalues the chronically ill and disabled . Societal pressures are significant. No-one lives in a vaccum.

Can anyone ensure me that one or in fact MANY people will not wrongfully die if this legislation is enacted in ACT ?

In oncology such legislation is not NEEDED.

If there is adequate access to high quality specialist palliative care patients DO NOT die in agony as proponents of this legislation try to propose and distort the facts to suggest that they do. Cases of bad experiences are just that – single cases – often from years ago when palliative care did not really exist .High quality care is not cheap and palliative care in Australia is universally underfunded . Patients want to die at home and more community palliative care funding would enable this to happen which would greatly improve end of life care for many ACT residents.

Thousands of Australians die each year WITHOUT ACCESS to adequate palliative care services . This is SHAMEFUL.

Why should those at the end of life have to justify to themselves and their families that they need care and not VAD ?

Why should they have to feel this silent pressure ?

What about these people – why is the CHOICE of a few put above these ?

The measure of a society is how well it cares for the frail and vulnerable and this law despatches

them rather than cares for them.

Bracket creep with time is inevitable – ask Alzheimer's Australia .

A handful of Australians suicide every day . Most suffer from depression which is reversible . Almost all do NOT have terminal illnesses. Coronial data in Victoria which documented a few hundred cases of the chronically ill taking their own lives over a few years in often very desperate and sad ways does NOT reflect people begging for VAD, but rather people developing depression with its associated desire for suicide under the stress of chronic ill health . This data reflects the tragedy of undiagnosed and untreated DEPRESSION and its lack of recognition NOT the tragedy of those so desperate for VAD that they take matters into their own hands .

Almost all medical societies world wide reject VAD . I want politicians to listen to these and the doctors who deal with dying patients .

Thankyou for considering my views

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