



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Chair), Ms Leanne Castley (Deputy Chair),
Mr Andrew Braddock MLA, Mr Ed Cocks MLA, Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2023

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Dear VAD Committee,

I have decision-making capacity, but my mental illness is non-terminal. Nevertheless ACT assisted dying laws must not deny me a peaceful end of life alternative.

I am 31 and have suffered from psychiatric illness for around 15-20 years. I do not feel good. As summarised in [Palliative psychiatry in a narrow and in a broad sense](#) (2022), with evidence based treatment some people with severe and persistent mental illnesses like me do not achieve a level of mental health, psychosocial functioning or quality of life that is acceptable to us; With each unsuccessful treatment attempt, the probability of achieving symptom reduction declines whereas the probability of somatic and psychological side effects increases.

I have exhausted tens of psychotherapies, medications and clinicians. As outlined in [Psychological treatments for mental disorders in adults: a review of the evidence of leading international organisations](#) (2017), the range and effects of potential treatments for mental illness are wider than is typically the case for physical diseases. It would be intolerable for me to exhaust all potentially beneficial psychiatric treatments.

Exhausting countless treatment options has been demonstrably intolerable for others in my situation. We instead endure injury and poorer qualities of life after botched suicide attempts, complete often painful and indignified suicides that traumatise those who find our corpses.

Dignified end of life options should be made available even to persons with psychiatric illness. After decades of effort to destigmatise mental illness, we continue to demand equal [dignity](#).