Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

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Dear Secretary,

We write in reference to the Inquiry into End of Life Choices in the ACT. We are deeply concerned by the possibility that assisted suicide/assisted dying may be introduced in the ACT.

As Christians, we believe that all life is unique, created by God, and special; and death is not to be approached lightly, or quicker than is intended by God. We believe it is not for humans to ‘play God’ and seek to end life, whether by one’s own hand (suicide), or at the hands of others (murder/manslaughter).

We are concerned that if the ACT were to introduce assisted suicide/assisted dying, this would inevitably lead to abuse.
- Older or unwell individuals could be pressured to end their lives, perhaps because they are seen as a ‘burden’ on others.
- Older or unwell individuals may not be valued sufficiently or encouraged to continue contributing to society and the lives of others.
- Those diagnosed with illnesses would not necessarily seek treatment, instead seeing assisted suicide/assisted dying as an answer to their condition.
- Doctors would be involved in ending life, rather than saving it.

Once assisted suicide/assisted dying is considered acceptable, the potential for suicide to also be regarded as acceptable is increased. We would not want to see individuals seeking assisted dying for any reason, particularly non-medical reasons.

We are particularly concerned by the path of assisted suicide/assisted dying for those diagnosed with long-term or terminal illnesses. We have family and friends who have been diagnosed with cancer and other debilitating illnesses, only to later enter remission or establish a way of life that is possible even in the midst of illness. These individuals would not have seen children marry, grandchildren born, or experienced many other joys if they had instead taken the option of ending their lives prematurely. To legalise such a practice would cause undue pain and sorrow for all involved.

Illness and death are an unfortunate part of the world in which we live. They cause much pain and suffering, and yet we are thankful for the many medical and scientific advances that have seen life expectancy increase. We continue to benefit from and experience joy with many around us who are older, or face ongoing illness. We believe it would be a great tragedy if assisted suicide/assisted dying were introduced in the ACT and these loved ones were encouraged to take matters into their own hands and end life prematurely.

We implore the Committee to recommend against the introduction of assisted suicide/assisted dying in the ACT, and thank you for considering our views.

Yours sincerely,
Timothy and Elizabeth Robertson (via email)