



**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:** Clara Curtis  
**To:** [LA Committee - EOLC](#)  
**Subject:** Inquiry into End of Life Choices in the ACT  
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**To:** Select Committee on End of Life Choices in the ACT  
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Not confidential

Dear Committee,

**ACT community views on the desirability of voluntary assisted dying being legislated in the ACT: Risks to Individuals and the Integrity of our Health Care System**

Euthanasia and assisted suicide laws are by their nature intrinsically unsafe and inhumane laws.

Euthanasia laws intentionally shorten life and inflict premature death on vulnerable people. While euthanasia law starts off with the intent to shorten only the lives of people with terminal illness, in practice from evidence overseas, such laws will inevitably widen to contribute to the premature death of people with depression, elderly people with dementia and even children!

Health care has always been about supporting people, caring for them and in the process affirming that every human being is worthy of continued care and support. By contrast, the message inherent in any laws that permit the killing of a certain category of people (in this case, people with a terminal illness) is that some lives are unworthy of living or some people in the eyes of the law are better off dead!

The push for premature death and assisted suicide laws should not be allowed to take root in a civilized society. Vulnerable people deserve help, not killing. Euthanasia law is about giving doctors and nurses the right to kill their patients. Assisted suicide law which is another facet of euthanasia law promotes suicide and is counter-productive to the various suicide prevention programs implemented in the community.

Euthanasia assisted suicide laws contemplated by this inquiry as a type of End of Life Choices not only go against community sentiment to care for people but also threaten the future availability and innovation of Palliative Care. Palliative Care expertly provides holistic care of people with a terminal illness. It is humane and consistent with the Do No Harm value of health care. On the other hand, the legalisation of euthanasia gives false legitimacy to the inhumane view that some lives are unworthy of support and care, hence qualified to be terminated using euthanasia assisted suicide laws.

A majority of health professionals in Australia and overseas have rejected the push that they should be involved in the termination of their patients' lives. In fact, medical professionals overseas have resigned due to euthanasia law putting them in a conflict of interest situation vis-a-vis the duty of care they owe their patients.

I urge this committee to reject unsafe inhumane euthanasia assisted suicide laws as a form

of end-of-life choice for the ACT. The drastic impact such law has on the integrity and caring nature of the health care system cannot be underestimated.

Yours sincerely,  
Clara Curtis