



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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Dear Hon Edward O'Donohue,

I am writing to file a Public Submission regarding the ACT Inquiry into End of Life Choices.

The provision of such a service is a significant leap for human society. It is not one that will end in good.

Euthanasia provides people with a means of ending their actual or perceived suffering. It is not a situation which can effectively be legislated, because we are such a diverse community with dynamic needs and expectations. The number of parameters needed to regulate this service are unrealistic.

In addition to these logistical factors, euthanasia devalues human life. It provides a quick and easy solution to that which is a natural component of development and ageing. It will eventually see an erosion of the value we place on human life at all stages.

Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Dying will see the slow suffocation of our palliative and aged care systems, systems which are becoming impoverished in spirit and application due to the idea that life at the end is merely maintenance.

Euthanasia is dangerous for health practitioners and usurps the intimate patient-doctor relationship. This is the point I feel most strongly about. As a future doctor, I will be seeing this degradation of values play out if such a service becomes reality. There is already a meagre funding for palliative care research and facilities, poor understanding of patients' needs at the end of life, and a general disrespect and almost contempt for people in their last days and weeks. How much worse will this become if such legislation is passed? Doctors are repeatedly wrong at estimating a patient's prognosis in terminal illness, and this time around death is often an appropriate and healing time for family and friends to grieve together, say goodbye and accompany their loved one in those last days. For doctors, too, this is a time to reflect, pay their respects, maturely navigate family's needs and expectations, and indeed grow in their understanding of life and medicine itself.

Euthanasia is not medicine.

Euthanasia is dangerous for doctors and patients. It should never be legalised in Australia.

Sincerely,

Catherine Mannering