



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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

Submission Number: 278

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From: Jacqueline Jenkins
To: [LA Committee - EOLC](#)
Subject: I am an ACT resident, here is my submission to the inquiry
Date: Friday, 16 March 2018 4:59:31 PM

Re: I am an ACT resident, here is my submission to the inquiry

Dear Secretary,

I am extremely concerned that euthanasia might be legalised in the A.C.T. Please take my perspective into account when you are deliberating about this important matter. Thank you. My concern is that vulnerable people, including the disabled, the mentally ill and the frail-aged, may be pressured into ending their lives if euthanasia becomes legalised. I am also concerned that there may not be adequate safeguards in place to prevent the abuse of vulnerable, sick people. We have just seen a very salutary case mentioned in the media. That of Professor Stephen Hawking. He was given 2 years to live back in 1963. Fifty-five years later he has only just this week passed away!!! What if euthanasia had been an option for him in the early sixties? Might he not have been pressured into ending his life, thinking that he would take control of his own demise? The reality was that he would actually go on to have a long and productive life. Doctors do not always get their prognoses right and Hawking's case is just one of many. I am concerned that, if euthanasia were an option, people who have been wrongly diagnosed may end their lives, thinking that they may as well kill themselves as they haven't got much time left anyway. I am also concerned that, if euthanasia were legal, elder abuse would see older people pressured into taking their own lives because their families made them feel that they are a burden and that it would be "best for everyone" if they just ended it all. Depressed people are another group who would be vulnerable to making an irreversible, bad decision if euthanasia were legal. Plenty of people recover well from depression. If euthanasia were legal I think that the suicide rate would skyrocket. Is that what we want? Suicide is an irrevocable, permanent "solution" to a temporary problem. For these reasons I believe that euthanasia is not an option for a safe, humane, civil society. Palliative care services are the way to go. Literally. Terminally ill people's pain is managed by good palliative care, such as that offered by Claire Holland House, and they are made comfortable in their final days. There should be more funding for palliative care in the A.C.T. rather than the legalisation of euthanasia. My 93-year-old Aunt passed away in Sydney last year at her nursing home. She had suffered a series of strokes, the last of which left her alive but unresponsive. The family requested that palliative care be commenced. Aunty Jean was kept comfortable and passed away just a couple of days later. It seems to me that proper palliative care is able to keep people comfortable as life is ebbing away and, in many cases, to a certain degree it hastens the inevitable. Please do not go down this route of legalising euthanasia. While there is a very small, noisy minority of people advocating for its introduction, I believe that there is a very large, perhaps less vocal, percentage of the population who share my grave concerns. Thank you for taking my views into account.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Jenkins

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