



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 Ed Cocks MLA, Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2023

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Coupland, Alicia

From: LACommitteeVAD@parliament.act.gov.au
Sent: Friday, 1 December 2023 2:05 PM
To: LA Committee - VAD
Subject: Inquiry submission - Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2023

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Full name: Tony Whelan

What is your submission about?:

Eligibility criteria to access VAD

Your submission:

Dear Committee members I welcome the Government's decision to develop legislation for VAD in the ACT, and in particular I support the bill's proposal to not require a set period of time-to-live as a condition of eligibility for VAD. I would have hoped that the bill would also provide for those who may not have a terminal illness, but who do have an intolerable serious physical or psychological condition. I have a neuro-degenerative illness which is currently manageable. The time may come when it will become impossible for me to function as an autonomous individual, yet my condition may not be regarded as terminal. I would prefer to then be able to end my life in a dignified manner, rather than slowly waste away over years in a nursing home or hospital. That is what happened to a dear friend of mine, a former university lecturer, a few years ago. In her eighties she had a stroke that blinded her permanently. Her mind was still intact and in hospital she begged me to find a way to help her end her life. Of course I could not do that without breaking the law. I visited weekly for two years and watched her gradually become physically and mentally frail and despondent, as being bed-ridden with little mental stimulation took its toll on her. She would have done anything to be able to die on her own terms rather than experiencing the futile prolongation of her life in an institution. I feel the same way. Tony Whelan