



**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

**Submission Number: 30**

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13<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

[REDACTED]  
Secret Harbour. WA. 6173.  
[REDACTED]

Select Committee on End of Life Choices in the ACT.  
Dear Members,



**HISTORY:**

Enclosed is my Submission to 42 individual Members of NSW Legislative Council (Upper House) dated 20MAY2013 regarding the Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2013. The Bill was defeated in NSW, and, I received only 3 replies from the 42 members to whom I sent this Submission to Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney. NSW. 2000.

This Submission stands today with only changes to my personal location and entering my 80<sup>th</sup> year in 2018. My sons are employed in WA now with their families; so, unaided I sold my NSW home, flew to WA and after 1 month had purchased the above WA home. I consider myself a Christian and of sound mind, ably managing my everyday household cleaning, yard, and accounts etc. myself. I belong to Mandurah WA Probus, Red Hatters Secret Harbour WA, and, Wannadoo Tours Mandurah WA (with whom I will travel to Kalbarri WA for Easter 2018). I am healthy and drive my RAV4 on newly-learned WA highways and bi-ways.

**TO BE REPORTED ON BY YOUR SELECT COMMITTEE:**

**1. CURRENT PRACTICES UTILIZED IN THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY:**

I am not confident in the current Medical Community being able to make decisions for capable older Australians – we, Australians are a very sensible and capable group and understand life. Too many doctors are being brought in from overseas with doubtful qualifications and even our Australian educated Doctors seem to be middle-men to Specialists these days.

Palliative Care is suitable for uncertain people and those frighten to die. I am not one of those.

Experience has shown me that End of Life Choices should be allowed

ONE Year prior to diagnosis of a Terminal Disease. Reason being this has been the period I have experienced for my 2 examples in 20May2013 Submission.

6 Months prior to expected demise with no one to care for them, single persons would end up in palliative care, and this would not be the choice of everyone and they would suffer in silence as the medications would make them incapable of making decisions any longer.

Period should be ONE YEAR – NOT 6 Months as accepted in Victoria.

2. ACT COMMUNITY VIEWS:

YES - VIEWS of majority of Australians should be legislated. All States and Territories including ACT should be Federally Legislated. This would end uncertainty and fear for the vulnerable at the whim of Politicians and others. Australia could save financially and lessen our country's deficit as there would be less need for more Nursing Homes which are usually owned by Medical Practitioners (self-interested), and, run by Religious Groups.

3. RISKS TO INDIVIDUALS:

There would be no Risk – the Person involved should be able to legalise Voluntary End of Life Choices with a personally signed document drawn up by a Solicitor that states their wishes. There would be no need for a complicated set of laws. This, then, would be my personal decision and would not unnecessarily involve others. This is a PRIVATE Decision and should not be burdened on others.

4. VICTORIA'S SCHEME:

A plethora of laws complicate this Scheme, and the period of 6 months is not a suitable time, it should be ONE YEAR. One Year is needed for singles to work out their own solution; 6 Months into a Terminal Illness is disastrous as usually on mind-destroying Morphine and therefore being forced to comply with other's directions.

ACT should be a Leader and not a Follower.

5. ACT FEDERAL LEGISLATION:

ACT should bring in Federal Legislation covering All of Australia. The majority of Australians want this done and dusted. This would lead to more important time being put to our YOUNG AUSTRALIANS in Education, Health, Housing, Jobs and Infrastructure – Australia-wide – we are falling behind other countries these days. The Young

Australians are our future and their needs are urgently required now.

Sorry for such lengthy detail – it is a very important subject and should be dealt with as soon as possible.

  
Marjorie Ann Edwards.

URUNGA. NSW. 2455.  
20th May, 2013.

Members of NSW Legislative Council (Upper House)- 42

Dear

(42 Individual letters sent - only 3 replied)

THE RIGHTS OF THE TERMINALLY ILL BILL

Democracy is a system of government by the people direct or representative; the politically unprivileged class.

As my government representative I request you vote for The Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill.

I am sure if you investigate this issue of "choice" thoroughly, you will come to the realisation that this is an extremely important issue to all people, and even yourself one day; for we will all reach this period in life and we will all desire to make our own final decision if Australia (NSW) is a truly Democratic Country.

At the age of reasoning and thence throughout our lives, we make our own choices and decisions, but at the end of life our personal democratic rights of "choice" are removed and taken over by our elected representatives of NSW, who are naturally influenced by personal religious beliefs, also somewhat controlled by well-heeled religious lobby groups, as well as strong-minded parliamentarians who prefer to avoid the subject - saying nothing, or no, is always easier than saying "yes" to "choice". To deny the will of the great majority of citizens is a denial of Australian Democracy. Unnecessary anxiety is caused to citizens not having this "choice" and the worry leads to dementure and escapism from the frightening future. They go into nursing homes and slowly decay mentally and physically, or, it is palative care to be slowly legally euthanased with sole-destroying medications. These situations suit some of the population and there should be such places and such treatments; but it should not be mandatory, and, the majority of individuals need the "choice" of how we choose to die, and, voluntary assisted dying.

At 75 this year, I lead a full happy healthy life, and, I consider myself to be of Christian persuasion. I excelled at school, worked full-time till retirement at 55 in the Commonwealth Public Service, reared and educated 3 children, then retired with my husband of 48 years to Urunga NSW, now a widow of 7 years. The worsening work situation in Australia has dispersed my children to far removed locations, and, contact is mainly by skype and telephone; so I solely maintain my home and 1/4 acre block entirely; and keep abreast with current affairs and keep busy generally.

I speak from experience of seeing death and the fear it brings to people.

I was home with my Father at Forster NSW when at 67 he died of Lung Cancer (those days once found terminally ill and nothing could be done, he was discharged home to die with medications from Taree Hospital). I witnessed him forcing an object into his mouth during the early hours trying to get more oxygen into his throat - he died 4am. He should have been given the "choice" months before, as on that final night he asked me to help him to die. I did not understand as much then as I was younger and the suggestion horrified me; these things stay with you forever.

Further in 2006, my Husband died with me caring for him at home, lasting 8 months from time of diagnosis of Mesothelioma. His words to me a month before were "I wish I could go". He hated morphine as it leads to halusinations and other unpleasantaries which he discussed with me; when sedation is added to the morphine it is close to the end. Many months he was unable to view tv, read and finally not able to write; however, he had been an amateur artist and he was able to paint till the last week-strange how nature works. He passed on 1pm early February. Euthanasia is the kind way and should have been able to be his "choice".

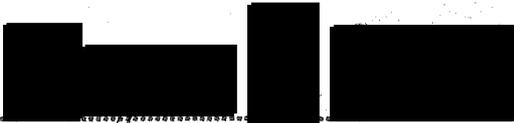
Often my thoughts are taken up with what will I do with no close family. A number of years ago I joined Exit International, and, I have a legal Directive etc. prepared, also house notes to inform my children of their responsibilities. At least preparation gives me satisfaction and I get on with enjoying life.

The "choice" of legal euthanasia would be "a blessing in advance", and, I consider whilst of sound mind, one should have the democratic right to sign a further legal document to say when the time has arrived on their say so...worry would be a thing of the past then. I do not need an outsider to dictate my life and fill my body with toxic drugs...my children have been informed of my views on death. I held our little 16year old poodle dog when she was euthanased by injection; I felt happy that she just slid down whilst I held her. It is the kind end to a wonderful life for anyone.

Please vote for The Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill.

In the meantime during 2013, I look forward to a coming week in Lightning Ridge/ Toowoomba, and, November to Tasmania for 17 days, with plenty in between...Probus, View, ukelale practices, canasta cards, live theatre and films, and whatever else fits in. Hopefully in years to come it will be a Democratic "Choice" that I have the privilege to make.

Thanking you.



Marjorie Ann Edwards