



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

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Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA.

Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

Submission Number: 137

Date Authorised for Publication: 29/3/18

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - EOLC](#)
Subject: Legalised assisted suicide will inflict terrible mental stress on the elderly
Date: Monday, 19 February 2018 10:07:35 PM

Please accept my submission to the inquiry into end of life choices.

I strongly oppose the legalisation of assisted suicide and ask that you rule it out at an early stage from your consideration of legitimate end-of-life choices.

This is because even the availability of 'assisted dying' would inflict terrible psychological pressure on elderly or severely ill people to prematurely end their lives when they would otherwise have no desire to do so. This pressure will only increase if it were ever to become the dominant method for disposing of old people. In such a climate, effective palliative care would be scarce and much more expensive, increasing the pressure to submit to doctors' and relatives' wishes especially when there are fewer people of working age to bear the cost of medical care for the elderly as the population ages.

Experience in countries where "assisted suicide" has become legal has shown a whole raft of undesirable and unethical consequences, ranging from medical insurance companies refusing to pay for treatments that may prolong life in favor of cheap "suicide pills", through the definition creep that is now seeing critically ill children, those suffering from alcoholism and anorexia, and even the depressed being incorporated in the scope of those who can be killed, to medical staff euthanizing patients against their will.

I therefore pray that the committee will use the opportunity presented by this inquiry to safeguard the ACT from these outcomes before the financial arguments begin to weigh more and more heavily upon the debate. In order to protect, enhance and expand the availability of effective palliative care choices (which are the only choices that truly value human life), I pray that you will recommend that the killing of the vulnerable, euphemistically termed assisted dying, not be legalised.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Wallace

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