



Catholic Women's League of Victoria & Wagga Wagga



A Member Organisation
of CWLA Inc.

She has put her hands to strong things • Proverbs 31:10-31

Legal & Constitutional Affairs Committee
Parliament House,
Canberra, ACT 2600

Submission on the "Medical Services (Dying with Dignity) Exposure Draft Bill 2014"

Our organisation was founded in 1916 by a group of professional women (Drs, Educators, Lawyers & Trade Union Members). Today our members carry on the vital work initiated by those women almost 100 years ago.

We have international representation at the United Nations through our membership of Catholic Women's League Australia (NGO) and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) which has a membership of 5 million + worldwide. WUCWO has representation at ECOSOC in New York and Geneva; ILO in Geneva; UNESCO in Paris; FAO in Rome and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

We are of the opinion that the Medical Services (Dying with Dignity) Draft Exposure Bill 2014 is based on the obfuscation of the word "MEDICAL" in s51 (xxiiiA) of the Constitution and therefore does not fit within the Commonwealth's legislative powers under s51 (xxiiiA) of the Constitution, and (b) any implied legislative powers of the Commonwealth – refer to Section 6 (a) and (b).

The Constitutional Alteration (Social Services) 1946 referendum enabled the Federal Government to extend the powers of government over a range of social services that were not included in s51(xxiii).

We question the utilitarian ethics of this Bill. To quote physician – philosopher Edmund Pellegrino who states: "Physicians must never kill. Nothing is more fundamental or uncompromising".

The right to be allowed to die by refusing life supporting treatment that is burdensome and of no assistance is not euthanasia. Proper palliative care assists people who face this situation. This allows for a dignified death by allowing the dying process to flow unimpeded.

This is where palliative care comes to the fore and an area of health care that need more specialists and funding. This is truly a social justice issue that needs urgent attention.

Further legalising assisted suicide undermines crucially important suicide prevention programs.

Section 5 (1) and (2) is not a medical service and can never be part of medicine.

Part 2. Sections 10 -15

While the how to and how to change one's mind in these clauses are supposed to provide a safeguard for those who may seek to decide to choose physician assisted euthanasia or suicide under this Bill, history shows that there are no safeguards when it comes to this type of legislation.

Part 5. Sections 24 – 26

We totally oppose having to pay through our taxes for physicians to kill people.

Historically, the T4 German euthanasia program began in 1939. Children with disabilities were first dehydrated to death, they were then injected and finally they were gassed. Taxpayers are already required through Medicare to pay for the killing of babies in the womb who have been diagnosed with a disability. Is that any different to what happened in Germany?

The elderly who made Australia the safe place it is today are now considered to be a burden upon society. Such a Bill as this would expose vulnerable people to being made feel that they are a burden on society and that it is their duty to use legal means of removing the burden from their loved ones.

The Netherlands and Belgium are a perfect example of why this Exposure Draft Bill should be rejected. The pretence of consent is a sham in both countries. Statistics prove that people are being killed by physicians without consent and many physicians admit that they do not even bother to register the death as euthanasia.

Therefore we strongly urge the committee to reject the Medical Services (Dying with Dignity) Exposure Draft Bill 2014.

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Mary Glowrey House,

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