

The last few weeks have been tumultuous. Today we have a new Prime Minister and it is very likely we'll have an election within the next six months. It's therefore important that we focus our minds on the very clear information given to us by the votes given by the Senate for or against the Restoring Territory Rights Bill.

Firstly I will note that the Bill was lost by only two votes. I have been able to make a close study of the speeches given on the 14 and 15th of August and found that there was a very close correlation between the senators' ideas about euthanasia and their willingness to pass the Bill. That is likely to mean that the years of lobbying by VE and DWD groups around the country has made some impact at least on the Labor Party. However only four senators in the Coalition voted for the Bill and this is where it is very clear that a vote for the Coalition means a no for VE legislation.

The only parties that have a policy on assisted dying are the Greens, the Liberal Democrats and some independents. It's timely that this vote on the Restoring Territory Rights Bill and the election are coming together because it will help us to keep our eyes focused on where we have to vote in order to achieve our goal of legislation allowing assistance to die. Even if we have voted for either of the major parties in the past we must be very sure that either they have a policy on assisted dying or that the candidate of choice will vote for assisted dying as a matter of conscience when the matter is raised.

I am attaching the analysis of the vote for you to consider as well as the speeches so that you can assess whether my analysis is correct.

The other issue that has been raised by the vote in the senate is the issue of our rights as citizens of Australia living in the ACT. The fact that of the seventy senators who voted only two were from the ACT and all the other sixty eight were voting on a matter for the ACT is a serious problem. Reading the pompous speeches by senators from other states made me very angry that we are in such a powerless position and this powerlessness will remain a factor of our lives while s122 of the Constitution remains as it is. I have sent my analysis to the presidents of the other states and territories in the hope that they will use it to inform their members of the voting patterns of senators from their states and how they have influenced us. I have also sent it to some of the political contacts I have made in the Assembly in the hope that they will raise the matter with their parties.

I am attaching a proposed amendment to the Constitution for you to consider. Changes to the Constitution are always difficult to get through but I believe if it is argued correctly people from the other States may be persuaded that it is just as important for them to consider changing s122 as it is for us.

The DWDACT committee has urged me to write to you to ask you not to despair. I hope that you are not in a state of despair because as I have pointed out the Restoring Territory Rights Bill is timely. We can use the result to inform ourselves about the very serious challenges we face. We can face them wisely by voting for what we believe in not by voting the way we have always done. I certainly will be voting Green until the Party that I have voted for in the past has a policy on assisted dying and I am completely convinced that its candidates will vote for legislation on assisted dying.

Another reason not to despair is that the committee looking at end of life matters in Western Australia has submitted its report to the Western Australian government and is in favour of

legislation for assisted dying. This is heartening. It's likely that the New South Wales Parliament will look at another Bill next year. In Queensland the Clem Jones Group is taking action to speak to the Queensland government which inevitably will be of help to DWDQ. South Australia will have another Bill in the pipeline and it would appear from the overall ALP vote in the Senate that some senators in the ALP are changing their minds about assisted dying.

You may remember that two years ago Frances Coombe came to speak to us about the legislation lost by one vote in the South Australian Parliament due to the vote of an ALP MP. All these are good signs that we have finally begun to make an impact. No doubt there is a long way to go on many fronts for citizens in the ACT but the important thing is to keep hopeful and working.

Regards,

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