

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Advocate

'PEACE OF MIND PRESCRIPTION'

Voluntary assisted dying is well and truly out there now on the global platform. We are now seeing religious countries like Portugal, Spain, Malta get so close to providing a better way to pass for those that don't have an option.

This legislation should not be limited to a postcode. As someone living with a terminal illness and as an advocate nationally, the stories from those left behind, who also advocate, are the same - day in, day out.

We acknowledge the need for good palliative care but we must also accept that it cannot alleviate all end of life suffering. To offer up improved palliative care as an argument against VAD is to be incredibly naive as to the cruel and harrowing suffering that many illnesses (and their progression) bring. Voluntary assisted dying is very much a prescription for peace of mind to

those who are fully informed about their disease and who don't want to have to suffer anymore than they need. It is "voluntary" and we should never forget that.

Tanya Battel, Carina, Queensland

NO PEACE AT LIFE'S END

Tanya Battel from Carina, QLD suggests that voluntary assisted dying is a 'prescription for peace of mind' (*Adv. Feb. 13*).

But whose minds? According to many disability and aged care advocates peace is far from the minds of those they represent when considering VAD.

It is unfathomable to consider, that as two Royal Commissions investigate our "Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation" of the vulnerably disabled and elderly that VAD advocates could think we can provide 'peace' to the very people we neglect, by making it easier for them to take their own lives if they have a terminal illness.

Ms Battel also asks us to remember the voluntary part of VAD.

But the issue here is not that it's voluntary, but that one's decision to end their life can never be made independently of family, friends or society.

For some this means a peaceful end to suffering surrounded by family, but for others it can mean taking their lives prematurely in order to relieve their sense of burden - perceived or real - on loved ones and society. Perhaps we'll need a third royal

commission, this time to investigate how we 'voluntarily' offered 'peace of mind' to the elderly and disabled?

Clayton Hinds, South Burnie

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Vigil held in support of VAD legislation

CAMERON WHITELEY

SUPPORTERS of a bid for voluntary assisted dying to become law in Tasmania will hold a candlelight vigil outside Parliament this weekend, just weeks away from the legislation again coming before MPs.

The event has been organised by sisters Jacqui and Natalie Gray, who formed Your Choice Tasmania after a promise they made to their gravely ill mother, Diane, who suffered intolerable pain leading up to her death in 2019 due to a stomach cancer diagnosis.

House of Assembly MPs voted 17-7 in favour of the Bill after the second-reading debate, with a final vote expected next month.

It is the fourth attempt at enacting VAD in Tasmania — this time the legislation was first introduced by Mersey MLC Mike Gaffney in the Legislative Council.

Jacqui Gray encouraged those interested in attending to RSVP on the Your Choice Tasmania Facebook page.

There were emotional scenes in the Legislative Council chamber last year when Mr Gaffney's Bill passed that house. The legislation will allow people who are suffering from advanced, incurable and irreversible conditions, which are expected to cause their death within six months, to end their own lives.

Your Choice Tasmania will provide complimentary battery-operated tealight candles for attendees to place on the lawns, with names of loved ones able to be added.

Candle placements will start from 5pm on Saturday with photos and video footage taken from sunset at 8.10pm.

* February 17 was a date we heard some time ago re-the University ~~rep~~ panel report

Not certain if that is still the case but here's hoping for a good report

Mike