

End of Life Choice



Defining 'terminal' and 'hopeless' illness

- Terminal illness is a well-recognised concept. It refers to the stage in which an illness has reached an inevitable and irrevocable course to death which is anticipated within a short time frame; possibly six months.
- A terminal illness has four basic characteristics that may, or may not, be accompanied by intolerable and un-relievable suffering. These are 1) no chance of recovery, 2) a certain progression to death, 3) a rapid progression to death, and 4) a short time-frame to death. A terminal illness may therefore be defined as *an incurable illness that is certain to cause death in a very short period of time.*
- Hopeless and terminal illness share one characteristic. There is no chance of recovery. Hopeless illness is characterised by its permanence; the patient will never recover, and there is associated severity leading to intolerable and un-relievable suffering.
- Hopeless illness can therefore be defined as *an incurable illness of certain permanence or inevitable progression. The severity causes intolerable suffering which cannot be relieved by any acceptable treatment.*
- Arguably, the worst hopeless illness involves the longest time frame, with emotional, psychological and existential components of the illness becoming more significant the longer it persists.

*Although a terminal illness may be a hopeless illness, it is likely to be of short duration and therefore involving shorter intolerable suffering. **This is why the debate on law reform for voluntary assisted dying needs to focus on those experiencing hopeless rather than terminal illness.***

Reference:

Adapted from Syme, R (2003) Defining 'terminal' and 'hopeless' available from SAVES' website https://988c9073-ec7c-40b2-8b6c-41fea61805a8.filesusr.com/ugd/1062e1_b03beac799794f6b9071501880a99d85.pdf

*Compassion for suffering
The freedom to choose
Add your voice to the call*

SAVES was established in 1983 to campaign for legal, medically assisted voluntary euthanasia. The aim is to end suffering by providing choice in dying. SAVES works in the community and with Members of Parliament to achieve law reform.

SAVE-YA Syndicated Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Youth Advocates

Facebook: Support SAVE-YA Law Reform

A national youth lobby group which aims to provide a youth voice in support of legalising voluntary euthanasia in all States and Territories. Members between ages 18 and 35 are encouraged to join, make contact with their local MP and inform them of their support for voluntary euthanasia law reform.



Christians Supporting Choice For Voluntary Assisted Dying

christiansforvad.org.au

We are Christians who believe that, as a demonstration of love and compassion, those with a terminal or hopeless illness should have the option of a pain-free, peaceful and dignified death with legal voluntary assisted dying / voluntary euthanasia. This is strongly supported by the majority of Australian Christians.



South Australian Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying

facebook: SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying

We are a group of passionate nurses who believe in our patient's right to choose the end of life care they wish. The group provides a forum for the nursing voice and perspective on legalising voluntary euthanasia and other patient choices in end of life care.



MY BODY MY Choice-VE

facebook.com/pages/MY-BODY-MY-Choice-VE

MBMC provides a voice for people with disability in the VE reform debate. MBMC represents the interests of people with disabilities who wish to exercise choice in all aspects of their life, including choice at the end of life, with the view that choice and control are a fundamental human right for everyone.

MBMC argues that people with disabilities know how it feels to lose personal autonomy through their ongoing fight for self-determination, independent living and disability rights.

MBMC believes that people with disabilities, who have struggled to control their own lives and bodies, must be allowed to maintain control and autonomy throughout their life, especially at its end.



Doctors for Assisted Dying Choice

drs4assisteddyingchoice.org



We are a national organisation of Australian medical practitioners, both current and retired, who are committed to having a legal choice of providing information and assistance to rational adults, who, for reasons of no realistic chance of cure or relief from intolerable symptoms, would like to gently end their lives.

Assistance may be by doctor provision of medication for the patient to consume, or by doctor-administration.

Respecting rational patient end-of-life choices

Lawyers for Death with Dignity

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/1062e1_dd077d6dd79648c8baec58200361f054a.pdf

Lawyers for Death with Dignity acknowledges the need for people with profound suffering to have the legal choice for a medically assisted and dignified death.

The current law says suicide is not illegal, but assisting suicide is. People in a terminal state may have profound, unbearable suffering and be in the undignified position of being unable to end their life without assistance.

Advances in medicine have improved life expectancy, but South Australian law has not changed to reflect the often forgotten deterioration in quality of life that a longer life expectancy may bring.



Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying

facebook: Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying



Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying is an advocacy group promoting the rights of people to make decisions regarding their end of life wishes.

To go without pain, without trauma, without breaking the law, without endangering others and without suffering. To go gently, peacefully and with dignity.

We support good palliative care, encourage the use of Advance Care Directives and advocate for law reform to legalise the choice for voluntary euthanasia and voluntary assisted dying.