

## PROMOTE CARE, OPPOSE EUTHANASIA

### The push to introduce euthanasia & assisted suicide

The Victorian Government is seeking to introduce euthanasia and assisted suicide later this year. The proposed changes will impact everyone, not just those terminally ill. The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne believes that any proposal to introduce legislation enabling physician assisted suicide and euthanasia does not promote the good order of society and is not for the common good.

### What is euthanasia/assisted suicide?

Euthanasia is an act or omission which of itself and by intention causes death, with the purpose of eliminating suffering.

Assisted suicide (physician or otherwise) is where a drug is prescribed/provided for the express purpose of enabling a person to kill themselves.

### What it's not...

Euthanasia and assisted suicide must be distinguished from the decision to forego medical procedures that no longer correspond to the needs of the patient (disproportionate, overly burdensome or futile treatment). It is not euthanasia to provide adequate pain relief – even sedation if necessary. The intention to relieve pain is noble and ethically sound medical practice. The intention to kill a person is entirely different.

### The reality

Legally sanctioning euthanasia or assisted suicide would radically change health care and impact everyone – not just the doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals directly involved. It would ultimately harm us all.

Euthanasia always involves a second person and is therefore a public act with public consequences. One person assisting the death of another is a matter of significant public concern because it can lead to abuse, exploitation and erosion of care for vulnerable people. Euthanasia and assisted suicide can never be safe. Because those terminally ill (and others in the community) are vulnerable to powerful feelings of fear, depression, loneliness, not wanting to be a burden, and even to coercion from family members, no law can adequately protect them from euthanasia if it is available.

**Disability advocate Liz Carr recently voiced her concerns to Victorian MPs**

**Real dignity**

Our dignity is not dependent on our usefulness or health, but simply on our humanity. Everyone should be loved, supported and cared for until they die. There is nothing truly dignified about being killed or assisted to suicide. Such a death is always a tragedy. The community is rightly concerned about the high level of suicide in Australia and the effort put into reducing it, represents good public policy. To introduce government authorised suicide, while seeking to reduce the suicide rate is absurd.

We need to care for those whose suffering is so serious that death seems more attractive than life. Love and compassion are shown by valuing their lives even if they struggle to do so themselves. Victorians deserve better than euthanasia and assisted suicide.

For more information see:

- [Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of Victoria](#)
- [Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Submission to the End of Life Choices Inquiry](#)
- [Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference's Submission to the End of Life Choices Inquiry](#)
- [End of Life Choices Inquiry - Final Report](#)
- [End of Life Choices Inquiry - Minority Report by Daniel Mulino MP](#)
- [Catholic Archdiocese of Melboourne - Response to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Framework Discussion Paper](#)
- [Catholic Health Australia - Response to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Framework Discussion Paper](#)
- [Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics - Response to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Framework Discussion Paper](#)
- [Be Not Afraid: the Gift of Palliative Care](#)
- [Real love, care & compassion](#)
- [Euthanasia Myths & R](#)