



Join the campaign to
protect life



ACTION ALERT!



Victorian “Assisted Dying” Legislation ... Where We Are At

On Friday 3 November, the Victorian Parliament's Legislative Council voted 22 to 18 that the *Voluntary Assisted Dying* bill be read a second time.

IN TERMS OF WHETHER OR NOT THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENT LEGALISES DOCTOR PRESCRIBED SUICIDE, BETWEEN NOW AND THE FINAL VOTE IN THE COUNCIL, **MOST LIKELY 23 OR 24 NOVEMBER, WE NEED TO CLAW BACK 2 VOTES.** IF THE VOTE IS 20-20 IT WILL MEAN PREMIER DANIEL ANDREWS AND HEALTH MINISTER JILL HENNESSY WILL HAVE FAILED IN THEIR BID TO INFLICT THIS TERRIFYING LEGISLATION ON VICTORIA.

The votes we could conceivably claw back are those of the MLC's who have stated their vote FOR the legislation is dependent on certain AMENDMENTS. We know the government resisted *ALL* amendments in the Lower House when they knew they “had the numbers” ... but with the numbers being so much tighter in the Upper House, the government may well be forced to accept some amendments rather than fail altogether.

TWO MLC'S WHO HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL ONLY VOTE YES DEPENDING ON AMENDMENTS ARE:

Simon Ramsay, Western Victoria, Liberal Party
[69A Gheringhap Street](#), Geelong Vic 3220
Phone: 5222 1941

James Purcell, Western Victoria, Vote 1 Local Jobs
Shop 3, [32 Bank Street](#), Port Fairy Vic. 3284
Phone: 5568 2929

ANOTHER CRITICAL VOTE IS THAT OF:

Hon. Bruce Atkinson, Eastern Metropolitan, Liberal Party
[153-155 Springvale Rd.](#) Nunawading 3131
Tel. 98877 7188

We need supporters in the Western and the Eastern Metropolitan Regions to contact these men - SUPPORTERS WHO LIVE IN OR HAVE SYMPATHETIC FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN THE WARRNAMBOOL, BALLARAT, CAMPERDOWN, COLAC, COLERAINE, DUNKELD HAMILTION, PORTLAND AREAS.

Considered opinion would seem to be that it is not the arguments and concerns that you and we have, which will swing these men. We instead need to reinforce their concerns. The outlook for defeating the Bill does not look great but it seems likely the concerns expressed by them will not be fully addressed and we need to affirm these concerns in their minds. Studying their speeches, it would seem they do not like references to *suicide/state sanctioned suicide*. They unfortunately support intent of bill and just have concerns re implementation/ safeguards and whether they can be adequate.

These concerns include:

1. Greater safeguards needed for those who may be victims of abuse (particularly elder abuse)
2. Palliative care expansion needed and particularly in regional Victoria (*"hate to think... assisted death due to a lack of palliative care"*). In context of mentioning Britain, we can note it has long led the world in palliative care/ taken a different path to countries with assisted dying /euthanasia.
3. Not comfortable with self- administration and a person being in contact and possession of the locked box. Probably the concern is that a person could be haunted by the thought of being in possession and struggling with decision making/feeling a burden. There may be also concern regarding misuse by others (e.g. If the patient dies naturally, a person grieving may access).
4. "Strong belief" that those who have a mental health history should be assessed by a psychiatrist as an added safeguard. Simon Ramsay "strongly believes" that those who have a mental health history should be assessed by a psychiatrist as an added safeguard. He referenced Oregon experience of patients in a depressed state and worried that they are a burden to others
5. Clarification of resident status needed (some concern with people moving to Victoria to access).

Additional concerns raised by MP's include:

1. Elder abuse is a serious concern and if the bill becomes law that risk will increase.
2. That lethal substance will be made available to those requesting assisted suicide/euthanasia? A number asked what lethal substance(s) the government would make available.
3. Patients who are to self-administer the lethal substance will die alone.
4. That 12 months prognosis of life expectancy is too difficult to make with accuracy. The *World Medical Association* and Australian Medical Associations oppose assisted suicide/euthanasia;
5. Capital punishment is no longer law because of the risk of even one innocent person losing their life. This bill would mean the risk of vulnerable and isolated people being coerced into requesting assisted suicide/euthanasia. The risk of even one vulnerable person being coerced is too great a price to pay;

The process will take time which allows us all the opportunity to continue to lobby the faltering in the Upper House. Please use this week to do so. If these three do not represent you please contact those MP's who do and who opposed the bill, to thank them.

We are acutely conscious that this had been a long and arduous campaign and still we are urging you onto yet another action! Please know that sitting listening to the speeches in the Victorian Parliament in recent weeks, it has become apparent just how cooperative have been pro-life supporters, how hard they have worked visiting and writing to Victorian MP's. ALWAYS the NO letters vastly outnumbered the YES letters! Sometime in the future we will make an analysis of this... for your edification!

Denise M Cameron
Pro- Life Victoria (Inc)

prolife@prolife.org.au