



dying with dignity
nsw
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respect for the right to choose

Australians Want Change

Surveys conducted over the last two decades show that over 80% of Australians believe that terminally ill individuals should have the right to seek and obtain assistance to end their life with dignity. This right does not presently exist in any Australian state. Current laws therefore lag behind the will of the people.

Under existing law it is a criminal offence to assist a person to commit suicide. Individuals with a terminal or incurable illness who are experiencing profound suffering do not have access to information or assistance to help them voluntarily end their life in a humane and dignified manner. As a consequence they may be forced to suffer physically, emotionally and existentially and, if friends, family members or sympathetic medical practitioners try to assist them to end their lives, they are breaking the law and are liable to prosecution under the Crimes Act.

Desperate individuals sometimes resort to violent, undignified methods to end their lives. These methods are very distressing for the ill person, as well as for their loved ones.

Dying with Dignity NSW aims to bring about legislative reform, so that terminally ill individuals who experience profound suffering can choose to die with dignity. This document describes DWDnsw's Legislative Charter in support of these aims.

- 1 Persons with a terminal or incurable illness that creates unrelievable, profound suffering shall have the right to choose to die with dignity in a manner acceptable to themselves and shall not be compelled to suffer beyond their wishes.
- 2 No individual, group or organisation shall be compelled against their will to either participate or not participate in an assisted or supported death of a sufferer.
- 3 It shall not be an offence to confidentially advise a sufferer regarding a voluntarily chosen death, assist or support such a death, or to be present at the time of that death.
- 4 Sufficient safeguards shall be in place to prevent abuse of the process.