

**From:** louise spaulding  
**To:** [VAD Review Secretariat](#)  
**Subject:** Re: VAD review  
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4/1/20

Louise Spaulding



Dear VAD Review Panel

I am writing to you as a concerned Tasmanian citizen in regard to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill that has been tabled in Tasmanian Parliament recently and I am asking that you do not support it.

One of my many concerns is that it encourages a 'suicide culture' for those vulnerable people in our community that who have disability or suffer mental illness. Having a husband that has struggled with mental illness for many years, my fear would be that people like him could be offered Voluntary Assisted Dying as a 'medical treatment' when they were feeling suicidal instead of appropriate medical and psychological support. I have supported my husband through a number of suicidal lows that he has worked through with a network of people and it concerns me greatly that at these lowest points he could be taken advantage of by those promoting this mindset or chosen to take this option if it were offered, leaving children without a father and a wife without a husband in an effort to take the 'easy way out'.

The word compassion means caring for people in their pain (com = with = passion = pain) not being a party to taking someone's life so they can avoid it. Through discussion with nurses in the field, palliative care is not just the withholding of food and water until someone dies as was suggested in parliamentary discussion but true palliative care offers successful pain management and emotional support to the terminally ill. My sister-in-law, an end of life nurse did this so beautifully recently by providing the necessary medical support but also offering a gentleman that was an avid gardener access to my mother's bonsai trees in and around his room that bought him much joy and peace in his last few days. Being in pain does not mean that you no longer have 'dignity', this was true dying with dignity. Caring for someone in their dying moments is a gift and not something that should be taken away at a whim. We come into this life with love care and support and we should leave this world in the same way, not cut short our days for convenience, feeling like a burden or predictions of suffering.

Kevin Dunn commentator of the social documentary '**Fatal Flaws' Legalising Assisted Death**, states: "If fear of suffering or becoming a burden are the reasons for people losing hope it is up to each of us to become the reason for someone's tomorrow" (Kevin Dunn)

I am asking you as a representative of all Tasmanians to inform yourself from all perspectives in regard to the Assisted Dying Bill, not just those with the loudest voice and the most money. The social documentary '**Fatal Flaws' Legalising Assisted Death**, is available on the following link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gapC5mqe67Y> Alternatively I have attached and included a written brochure with some of the stories and points of view that are reflected in the film for you to include in your discussions. In the end, we are not talking about a general law with broad applications but about the lives and stories of individuals and, in particular, how this law has been extended, manipulated and misused in countries around the world. The social documentary and brochure included, I believe, is a professional, well-researched and balanced interview with people from all sides of the debate and covers a number of countries that have introduced this bill. It looks at the inherent problems that they have faced as a result. It asks the question:

**Should we be giving doctors the right to end the lives of others by euthanasia or assisted suicide? Fatal Flaws: Legalising Assisted Death is a thought-provoking journey through Europe and North America to find answers to this question. Some 20 years after these laws were introduced, even some of the most loyal supporters of assisted dying are questioning where these laws are taking us. It uncovers how these highly disputed laws affect society over time.**

I could continue to argue my thoughts but this documentary/brochure will give you a far clearer picture of the problems inherent in introducing this bill than I ever could. Please show the respect due to those with concerns by watching this Documentary. I would love to hear from you once you have to know your thoughts.

Regards Louise Spaulding