

## **Voluntary Assisted Dying Proposed Legislation**

It appears that proponents of voluntary assisted suicide have begun their victory laps. I have been very vocal in my opposition to VAD laws being embodied into this State and elsewhere. I continue to hold the strong view that no good whatsoever will come if these laws are passed.

Indeed, society will never be the same again. Here we are still in a COVID-19 global pandemic where death is all around us and into this context, we have sections of the community cheering on laws that will result in more deaths.

I thought a civilised society was against suicide and wished to do everything possible to eradicate it. But no, it seems we wish to offer people the option of taking their precious lives.

We can do better than this race to the bottom. We can create an environment of accompaniment from the beginning of a terminal illness to the end. Society must not abandon anyone, especially the most vulnerable.

Palliative care creates an environment conducive to caring and compassionate actions that can lead to someone dying well. Some of these horror stories of people dying in terrible pain are years old. Palliative care has advanced in its effectiveness and will do so even more if adequate funding from governments can be achieved.

People are frightened into supporting voluntary assisted suicide because they are led to believe they have no other alternative. Proponents of VAD should therefore hang their heads in shame and demand of their governments a standard of Palliative care that mitigates against a rush to a regime that sanctions death.

Paul Keating is right. Going down this path is a step too far. No one needs to suffer unbearable suffering, but a concerted effort to ease this suffering with world class palliative care system will at least challenge the view that VAD is the answer.

Suicide is suicide and it is a tragic consequence of a society that has failed its people. Suicide of any kind is not necessary because it leaves in its wake a kind of individual and community paralysis that seems to be placed in the too hard basket. How have we got to this stage? What support structures can we place around people? Can we do things better? Do people feel they are alone and have to carry the burden by themselves?

I say to members of parliament and those advocating for voluntary assisted suicide – “STOP and think again.” Let us have a good long hard look at ourselves before we go to where we have not gone before.

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