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Subject: FW: Voluntary Euthanasia (VE)- My Views 21.3.2017
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From: Richard Elphick
Sent: Sunday, 29 October 2017 11:39 AM
To: Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices <eolcc@parliament.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Voluntary Euthanasia (VE)- My Views 21.3.2017

Good Morning,

I am enclosing a short article that I prepared earlier this year, that I had previously forwarded to the Hon. Robin Chapple, for your information.

I hope that this may be of some interest to your Committee.

With best wishes,

Regards ,

Richard Elphick

29th. October 2017

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(P.S. I have recently moved house).

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Richard Elphick

5th. April 2014

“ VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA “ - (VE)

At the Senate elections re-run for WA voting today, I ticked the box for the “ Voluntary Euthanasia “ (VE) Party, for the very first time.

Apart from the fact that I, like many other Australians , have lost some faith in the major political parties, I decided to mark my vote on the ballot paper this time, just to signify that I am a very firm believer, in voluntary euthanasia . I did this, knowing full well that this particular Party virtually had no chance of getting sufficient votes, and / or preferences, from any other Party, to win a seat in the Senate.

My Personal Views :

I have held this view for some years now, but I understand that something like 83 % of the population - (I am not certain whether this percentage refers to State or Commonwealth, figures, and polls). They show quite clearly, that there is a very large number of voters, and people, who are in favour of having either having a referendum on this subject, or wanting our Government, to initiate some meaningful dialogue .

I believe that this is just another example- (and there have been many, many, like this)- where our elected politicians , do not want to take any notice at all, of what the population really require - to take some action.

Unfortunately, many of the state and federal politicians - past and present – have always been reluctant to discuss this subject, which appears to be some “ taboo “, or unacceptable to most of them.

This would appear to me, that our duly elected members of parliament, are not listening to the people who put them there !

I am also aware, that many of our elected polities, have some religious bent, or are members of, or affiliated to, one church, or another.

Even though, most elected politicians will always state, or claim, (in public anyway), that their personal religious beliefs, do not, or have not, influenced their decisions.

If you believe in this claim, then you must obviously believe in the Tooth Fairy, or Father Christmas ! Give me a break.

A large number of our Prime Ministers,- (particularly the ones in the early years of Federation)- were very firm believers in one church or the another , - and would often publicly state so. This must have had some effect on their decisions, whilst in government. Surely so.

Therefore, it is only quite natural, for them in my view, to take the position of- “ life must be preserved at all costs , and / or, - “ God would not want us to take this position, or approach , on voluntary euthanasia, et. al, - or something similar.

It Is My Body- No One Else’s !! :

I just cannot accept, in any shape or form, that anyone - and I mean anyone -, has any right or claim, on someone else’s body, and what they choose to do with it , under these circumstances.

And most certainly, they do not have any right whatsoever, to tell me what I should do with my own body.

This of course, is based on the assumption, that good legislation has been fully discussed, and eventually passed, in the Parliament, and has progressed to become the law of the state, or country.

Surely, it is the only ultimate choice that we all have - I can't see it any other way. To have a loved one, family member, or even yourself , endure suffering from years of excruciating pain, when perhaps they would like to end it all, and their life themselves, again makes no sense, or any justice, to me personally, at all.

We should all have the basic human right, of at least having a choice in how our lives end.

Quality of life - NOT quantity of life , has to be the mantra !

Many people will be very aware, of the analogy that is put forward, and mentioned, quite often, that most pet owners, would simply not allow their dog or cat say , to suffer from unimaginable pain, or discomfort. They would usually choose the more humane way, and have a veterinarian, give their distressed pet, (in what is often referred to as " the green dream "), when it is euthanized by injection.

Then why, is there a double standard, between humans and animals / pets, and the completely different approaches ? Quite mystifying to me.

Current Practice :

Any doctor, nurse, aged care worker, or others who are involved on a day to day basis within the general health care area, will tell you, of cases and experiences, that they have personally been involved with, or witnessed :

Switching off life support systems to the patient .

Administering inappropriate drugs- (some that even maybe undetectable).

Increasing the amount, or strength, of pain easing drugs, like Morphine, to hasten death, and other " questionable " medical practices .

With- holding food, and nourishment , etc. etc.

In other words, they, (and not necessarily always by choice), are playing the dual roles of a “ murderer “, or even God, in some people’s eyes.

If proper legislation was introduced, then perhaps this would not place the onerous burden of decision – making, on the medical staff, and which consequently, may then leave them open to possible criminal charges , and maybe even any sense of “ guilt “, that they may be feeling , as a result of their humane actions, in relieving suffering.

(There is a well publicised case in Perth this year - (2017)- , where a GP is being investigated by Police for hastening the death of one of her patients .)

The “ Greedy “ Relatives / Family :

I am also aware, of those that are concerned , that someone who is a beneficiary in a Will , may have their own reasons, for hastening the death of that person, in order, of course, to make some financial gain, or windfall .

Arguments Against :

There are all sorts of arguments against voluntary euthanasia, but there are several countries who have introduced laws to cover all facets of this difficult subject . I understand that these are working quite well, despite the feelings, and / or objections, of the “ do- gooders “, and the “ life at all costs “, proponents.

The latter of course, mean well, and are only acting on their own beliefs, but in my opinion, they do not have the right to impose those beliefs, on the rest of society.

Remember the old saying :

“ The road to hell is paved with good intentions “.

Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland - (the home of the Red Cross) - the US states of Oregon, and Washington, all have some forms of legalized VE .

The well known Australian writer and TV personality- Andrew Denton, has recently written a book on this subject, and is a very pro VE person.

Doctor Philip Nitzsche, from Darwin, is the leading figure on this emotional subject, in Australia. He heads an organization called “ Exit “, which provides people with information, and other items, to assist them with their sometimes difficult decision, to end their own life.

In Conclusion :

However, I am optimistic , that one day, legislation will be part and parcel of our law system here in Australia, and that it will be quite well accepted, overall.

To not happen, is beyond my comprehension, of what true humanity stands for, and the need for compassion for those who are suffering.

All in all , it is really, (for me), what is referred to these days, as a “ no - brainer “ , or a quite logical and normal, choice or decision.

The recent suicides of an elderly couple in Albany, WA., seems to have re-ignited the debate, on this very awkward subject.

We have been advised via the media, that the Labor Premier of Victoria- Daniel Andrews -, is very keen to introduce an “ Assisted Dying Bill “, which is hoped will be ready to be debated, and discussed in the Parliament, later this year (2017).

It appears this decision has some personal connection to the Premier, due to an experience with one of his own family members.

Finally, I am quite convinced, that Voluntary Euthanasia (VE), will one day, be legalized, throughout Australia.

However, it may not be during my own lifetime.

Richard Elphick

March 2017.

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