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To: LA.VAD
Subject: Submission on VAD in the NT
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To the Committee members
Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD)

Q1: Do you support making VAD legal in the NT?

We strongly oppose the introduction of VAD legislation in the NT.

The provision of compassionate and loving palliative care can be, and should be, prioritised and provided for those who are suffering.

It is morally and ethically wrong: "do not murder". And regardless of the use of dressed up of words such as *Voluntary Assisted Dying*, this is in actuality, making *assisted suicide* legal, legislating *murder* in certain contexts.

VAD is inconsistent with, and conflicts with, the role of an Organisation actually tasked with Health Care service provision. Health care services must be known for excellence in health care and this includes Palliative Care.

We have an excellent Service in Palliative Care, but their capacity is very stretched, and needs to be strengthened. The priority in the NT should be to raise the whole profile of Palliative Care, and resource it accordingly with staff, increased training opportunities, and increased reach into the community including more remote.

There is no justifiable place for a Health Service in the taking-of or facilitating taking-the-life of an individual. Its very risky to confuse the role of health care provider with that of 'life terminator'.

And there is no place for a Government to be given the power to take the life of an innocent citizen / resident. This is very risky for any population!!

The precedent set by other countries shows that while VAD may begin as a voluntary pathway for an individual, it soon becomes inclusive of other more *involuntary* selective options such as euthanising the disabled, the frail elderly, the depressed, the mentally ill, the weak.

The message that we the NT need to communicate as a society should not be that of how best to expedite the ending of someones life in suicide, but toward a higher valuing of the life of each person as made in God's image, precious and valuable, worthy of care and of the relief of pain and sorrow - we should be asking how may we provide the best possible support for an individual?

We oppose VAD legislation in the NT, and ask the Committee to not provide drafting instructions to the Attorney-General.

We would like to be present for the public consultation meeting planned for Alice Springs. Would you please notify us of the date, time and venue for this forum.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Auld
Pastor, Ilparpa Fellowship
& Registered Nurse

