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To: [LA VAD](#)
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I write to express my objection to the concept and practice of VAD and the proposed introduction of enabling legislation in the NT.

I deeply believe in the value and sanctity of life, and living in and with all conditions that life throws at us. Having faith does help enormously in enabling us to confront the dark hours that often creep into our lives, including death.

Life is a gift that needs to be treasured, knowing that this life on earth has a natural end through death. We do not choose how we enter life and a lot of what happens during our lifetime is not of our own choosing; we deal with these, and our strength and dignity always come to the fore when we face difficult and challenging life circumstances. The advent of a terminal illness is perhaps the most challenging event that can occur in one's life.

I can speak from my experience with my 46 yr old brother who contracted a terminal cancer. He was a man of strong faith. From the time he was diagnosed to the time he passed away we shared the most amazing life experiences. His illness drew our family closer than we had ever been, noting we were already blessed to be a very close knit family. At no time did he want or saw the need to leave this earth sooner than the natural end. He believed too firmly in the gift of his life and its value including to those around him being relatives, friends, carers as well as strangers who came to hear about his decision to fight till the end. He was a true and amazing inspiration to us all. We all gave him the best care we could through the love we gave him and the love he gave us. We spent quality time with him recounting pleasant memories and administering pain killers to ensure he was not suffering though he was at times in great discomfort. It was he who in the end strengthened us and his passing ended up being a moment of great joy for us in the sense that we had shared so many precious moments and he died with such great dignity and peace that we were unable to be sad having led life with him fully to the end.

This experience has left such a very strong mark on me that I believe everyone should have the opportunity to maximise and make the most of their life on earth. We often hear about our resilient capacities and I believe we should show it to ourselves and those around us and not shy away from the time of our natural death, however it comes. A terminal illness by its very definition will lead to death. Our dignity and strength come from facing it in a natural way with all the best care we can receive given all the advances in the medical field, the provision of pain killers that alleviate our suffering, the improvement in the nature and quality of palliative care, the love we can receive and give and the example we can be to those around us through our strength and tacit acceptance of a situation not of our own choosing.

Life is a gift, let's not give it away before we have to and let us help each other live life to the fullest.

Yours truly

Paul Lassemillante

