



Go Gentle Australia

News Update September 2018

As you may have heard, Senator David Leyonhjelm's Restoring Territory Rights (Assisted Suicide Legislation) Bill was defeated 36 to 34 on August 16 meaning that, once again, citizens of our Territories have been denied the same right as every other Australian to debate, and pass, laws for voluntary assisted dying. There were multiple reasons for the narrow defeat, none more so than the late reversal of support from Senators Georgiou (One Nation), Burston (Clive Palmer), Martin (Nationals) and Gallacher (ALP). The matter isn't entirely over yet: MPs Luke Gosling and Andrew Leigh have tabled the [Restoring Territory Rights Bill 2018](#) which may be debated in the House of Representatives in September.

We would again like to thank everyone who contacted their Senators, whether through our site or one of the sites of the Dying With Dignity organisations around the country. Your efforts have been noticed and contributed to the debate.

We also drew your attention to an e-Petition in Queensland of Voices for Change. This petition attracted well over 3,000 signatures and has certainly sent a message to the legislators in Queensland that an inquiry into End of Life Choices and Voluntary Assisted Dying is important to their constituents. It added to the voices of the Clem Jones Group, DWD Queensland and many others.



Over the weekend, Queensland Premier Palaszczuk announced an inquiry. "The parliamentary health committee will begin examining all issues to do with what's known as end-of-life care," she said. "I have personally listened to those who have watched their loved ones suffer ... and I too have watched my own family suffer." This will be the 4th inquiry, following in the footsteps of Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. We will keep you up to date of key dates and let you know when you can lodge a submission to the inquiry in due course.



Another positive piece of news happened on 23 August, when the report of the Western Australian Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices was tabled in both House of Parliament. A copy can be [downloaded here](#).

Unnecessary suffering at end of life, and broad community agreement regarding individual autonomy, form the basis for the Committee's recommendation that the Western Australian Government draft and introduce a Bill for Voluntary Assisted Dying. The Committee also recommended a Bill be drafted in consultation with a panel of experts.

The Committee, which was made up of Labour, Liberal, National and Greens MPs, voted 7-1 in favour of these recommendations.

The Government now has 3 months to respond to the report.

The narrow defeat in Canberra was a reminder of how challenging it is to pass these laws in the face of concerted disinformation-and-fear campaigns mounted by our powerful and well-resourced opponents, particularly those from within the medical profession. **If you live in WA please contact your local MP** today to strongly encourage the Government to put forward this legislation.

CONTACT YOUR MP in WA

As things develop in Western Australia we will keep you informed. Once the campaign gets underway we will be counting on your support as we seek to represent the voice of those who are suffering needlessly at the end of life.



Last year we released Lawrie's Last Letter. This powerful video tells the story of Lawrie Daniel's last letter to his wife, Rebecca, which she found after he took matters into his own hands, unable to continue to bear the suffering caused by his Multiple Sclerosis. We know there are many stories, some of which are on our [Story Wall](#) and in our book [The Damage Done](#). Personal testimonies can be a powerful way to legislators understand the need for such laws. **If you live in Western Australia and have a story**, we invite you to **share it with us via our secure website**. If you prefer to chat with someone, contact us via stories@gogentleaustralia.org.au and we will reach out.

Last but not least, Go Gentle Australia is growing! We're looking for a **digital content manager**. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested, please look up the [job description](#) and apply.

Thank you for your ongoing support.