



Policy On Assisted Suicide

There is no more fundamental expression of individual freedom than the right to decide what you do with your own body.

If the law prevents rational adults from making free choices about what we can do with our bodies, then our bodies do not belong to us but to the State and we are not really free at all.

When cancer, degenerative disease or some other ailment renders our life no longer worth living, if we are genuinely free we should be able to choose to end our lives. We should be able to escape pain and the tragic indignities of a failing body and die painlessly and peacefully, as medical technology currently permits.

While most fair-minded people accept that painlessly terminating the suffering of animals is a humane act of compassion, and this is recognised by the law, the law prohibits the application of the same principle to our own species.

The Liberty and Democracy Party, as a party that supports individual rights and freedom of choice, rejects this cruel double standard.

The LDP believes in the inalienable right of individuals to end their lives painlessly, at the time of their choosing, and is committed to ensuring that those who are suffering from terminal illness or crippling degenerative disease are legally able to obtain assistance to end their lives with dignity.

Despite opinion polls that show around 70% of Australians are in favour of some form of voluntary euthanasia, in 1997 with the tacit support of both the Liberal and Labor parties, Kevin Andrews MP succeeded in pushing a private members Bill through Federal Parliament that overturned the first law to

legalise voluntary euthanasia in Australia, enacted in the Northern Territory.

Providing assistance to commit suicide still remains a serious crime in all states and territories of Australia. Three states have life imprisonment as the maximum penalty, in others the maximum penalty varies from 10 to 25 years.

One system of values should not be imposed on the rest of society. In the case of voluntary euthanasia the denial of free choice may result in a slow and painful death. Such paternalism should not be tolerated.

The LDP is committed to the repeal of the Andrews Act and to enacting legislation to allow all adult Australians of sound mind the right to assisted suicide provided there are appropriate safety mechanisms to ensure consent is freely given and independently witnessed.

It also supports the free speech right to provide those who may wish to end their lives the information they require to do so.