



Assisted Dying is a simple choice

On-line Opinion by Everald Compton – posted Thursday, 1 February 2018

I am grateful for the gift of life that has been mine and I hope that I have managed to make a good contribution to the society in which I live.

This being so, I don't want to live if a time arises when I have no quality of life. At this point, I want out immediately, and if there are no laws authorising Voluntary Euthanasia in Queensland where I live, then I fully intend to do everything I can to bring on a good heart attack.

I do not want to lie in bed like a vegetable and cause my family to make endless visits to my bedside to see someone who is simply not me, just an object of pity.

I want them to remember me as an active and happy achiever who enjoyed their company. Their last sight of me must not be awful.

And I want to save the nursing home fees so the money can be used to give my grandkids a great start in life.

Clearly, the best outcome is for the Queensland Government to make it legal for me to voluntarily take a tablet.

Typically and sadly, Queensland is the only Australian State never to debate Voluntary Euthanasia legislation. Every other State has tried, some several times, and finally Victoria won the battle last year, making a huge breakthrough about which I rejoiced. For some reason, Queensland tries to hang on to the past and fear the future, something our earliest pioneers definitely did not do. It's out of character.

Let us for a moment review the case for voluntary euthanasia.

We will all die one day. It is inevitable. So, why go to extremes in perpetuating life when there can be not enjoyment of it. What are a few months in the whole fabric of our existence.

I believe that I am entitled to a life choice and I have left a health directive where I declare that I want all the plugs pulled when my life has no quality. If that doesn't work, I want a tablet or a needle or I will keep holding my breath for a long time.

Opponents say that some children will use voluntary euthanasia to get their parents money as early as possible, but safeguards are in place in Victoria to stop this happening. It causes no problems for me, as I love and trust my family and have spoken to each one of them about my attitude to dying. They know and accept the circumstances when I want to go.

Others say that palliative care is so good that people can be kept painless for months while they await death. This is quite simply a nonsense. Underneath the sedatives, the patient is under great mental stress as they struggle with the pointlessness of it all and its utter indignity.

Others say that assisting someone to die is an offence before God. That is simply an attempt to put all the blame on God for everything. As a practising Christian, I do not believe that God decides who lives or dies. Jesus himself deliberately chose the time of his death. He had a number of options to avoid the crucifixion, but he chose to go to the cross. We all have the same choice.

So, its time to stop making excuses and get rid of our fear of death. As death is part of life it must be rejoiced as if it is a birth.

If I am fortunate enough to get some notice of my death, I intend to stage a lively party with my friends and family where we share a drink and remember happy days. I will kiss them all goodbye and close my eyes. If nothing happens, I will ask them to keep giving me full glasses of whisky until my old heart can take no more.

I hope that the Queensland Government will legislate to take my death out of their hands and place it in mine. Democracy is totally about freedom of choice.

Some MP's fear losing their seats over this issue. They won't. Politicians only lose when they sit on fences and forget about doing their job.

Many MP's also fear the clout of Churches whom they feel will be aggressively upset about this matter. Some will, but the reality is that few people now take any notice of Churches, sad though this is. As a long term Elder of my Church, I have to bear a heavy responsibility for this tragedy.

I am not a fearsome character, but I want all my parliamentary friends to know that I am in their relentless pursuit in the cause of Assisted Dying. I will do it nicely, but ceaselessly.

May grace and peace be with you all.

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Everald Compton

Everald Compton is an Elder of the Uniting Church, an Honorary Senior Fellow of the University of the Sunshine Coast and an Honorary Fellow of the eminent think tank, Per Capita. He was made a Member of The Order of Australia in 1992 for his services to the community and was awarded The Centenary Medal in 2001 for his services to the Transport Industry.

Everald Compton chairs The Longevity Forum, a not for profit entity which is implementing The Blueprint for an Ageing Australia. He was a Founding Director of National Seniors Australia and served as its Chairman for 25 years. Subsequently, he was Chairman for three years of the Federal Government's Advisory Panel on Positive Ageing.

Professionally, Everald Compton is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Practising Marketer.