

# The End of Life Choice Act 2019

*An Act already passed by  
parliament after 2 years debate*

## The basic facts

ALL of these:

1. You have to be dying (within 6 months).
2. You also have to be suffering in a way that cannot be helped (that you find tolerable).
3. Two independent doctors have to agree that you are eligible.
4. **You** must ask your doctor for medically assisted dying.
5. Your doctor must **NOT** raise the subject with you.
6. Your doctor is required to have a number of discussions with you **BEFORE** even considering your application.

## Further criteria:

- You have to be 18 or over. (Overseas, most people who access medically assisted dying are 75+)
- You have to be mentally competent (understand what your request means).
- You have to be a New Zealand citizen or resident.

And more  
criteria:



- In addition to the 2 doctors, a psychiatrist may also be asked for their opinion.
- A Registrar appointed by the Government also has to record all details before approving.

# Who would NOT qualify for medically assisted dying?

**Unless you are dying** the following will **not** be considered for medically assisted dying:

- Being disabled,
- Suffering terrible pain but not terminally ill,
- Being mentally incapable,
- Being very old or tired of living,
- Revealing any sign of pressure (coercion) and you will be refused.

# Palliative Care?

1. Palliative care is enthusiastically endorsed by all supporters of the End of Life Choice Act.
2. In all jurisdictions where medically assisted dying has been adopted (now covering over 150 million people world-wide) funding for palliative care has increased.
3. Palliative care (according to data produced by Palliative Care Australia) cannot help the suffering of 5-6% of terminally ill patients.

In New Zealand 33,000 people die annually, which means that

...

about 1500 die with unrelievable suffering

The Aotea Centre holds about 2000 people



MP Peeni

Henare

*Ngāti Hine and  
Ngāpuhi*



“Historically, Māori had ways of speeding up the process of death if a disease or sickness was incurable.”

*“I ngā wā ō mua, he huarahi a te Māori kia tere ake te ara o te mate mena ka mate te mate.”*

Peeni Henare said that to him, tikanga is mana motuhake - Māori to make the decision which is right for them.

*“Ko te tikanga te mana motuhake - te noho a te Māori ki te whakataū i te mea tika mo ratou.”*

Poll shows 72% Maori support EOLC Act



# If the patient wishes to go ahead with his/her request for assisted dying

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- ONLY the patient can make this request. **Not** the family \*. **Not** the doctor.
- A request must be made in writing by the patient signing and dating approved forms in the presence of the doctor.
- If the patient can no longer sign, he/she can appoint another person to sign on his/her behalf.
- \* Unlike currently legal terminal sedation, or switching off life-support.

## Conscientious objection

- No doctor or medical practitioner is obliged to participate in assisted dying. (That includes nurses and pharmacists)
- Palliative care organisations may refuse to participate but must inform potential patients in advance.

## What's the shortest time the assisted dying process could take?

The Ministry of Health advises that the shortest period possible from an initial application to the assisted death is **around 15 working days**. Given the number of safeguards and consultations involved, this is probably a fast estimate.

International experience shows delay periods do not make the law safer, but some people die badly still waiting for the period to end.

More details:

How is the medication provided?

- Swallowed in a drink or by a tube into the stomach,
- Intravenously – triggered by the person or by the attending doctor.

The doctor **MUST** remind the person at least 3 times, that they can change their mind – right up to the last moment.

Archbishop  
Desmond Tutu



*Regardless of what you might choose for yourself, why should you deny others the right to make this choice?*

*For those suffering unbearably and coming to the end of their lives, merely knowing that an assisted death is open to them can provide immeasurable comfort.*

## More details: Legal

- **The Registrar** has to approve each application (but must wait at least 48 hours) and will publish an annual report and a review of the Act in 3-5 years.
- **Death Certificate** – BOTH the underlying medical condition, and the fact that the person received medically assisted dying must be recorded.

## And more legal details:

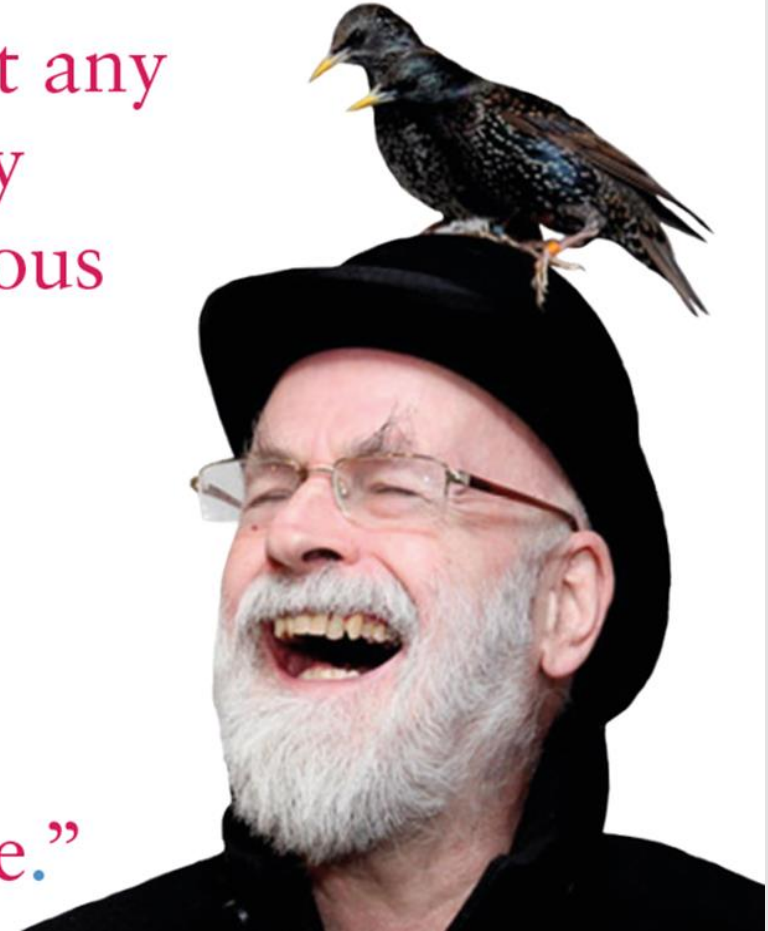
- Insurance cannot to be turned down as it is a legally approved procedure.
- SCENZ – “Support and Consultation for End of Life New Zealand” - an independent group of medical practitioners, psychiatrists and pharmacists willing to participate in medically assisted dying.

Terry Pratchett  
said it best:

“If I knew that I could die at any  
time I wanted, then suddenly  
every day would be as precious  
as a million pounds.

If I knew that I could die,  
I would live.

My life, my death, my choice.”





# The End of Life Choice Act 2019

*Te Whakamutunga o te Ture Kōwhiringa Ora 2019*

**Vote YES at the referendum: Stop the suffering**