

Extract of 7.30 Report interview by Leigh Sales with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on 14 November 2016

.....

LEIGH SALES: Let me run you through some other issues relevant to this question of disconnect. Every opinion poll on euthanasia find that a majority of Australians support it in some form. A poll in the lead up to the federal election put the figure at 75 per cent.

So Australians want that choice of medically assisted death for themselves and their families and yet mainstream politicians will not countenance it.

Why are you virtually en masse ignoring the public on this?

MALCOLM TURNBULL: Well, I think you've got to, it is a classic conscience issue, it's not a ... the last time it was addressed in the Federal Parliament, and that was really only related to the ability of the Northern Territory to legislate for it, it was a conscience vote, but it really is squarely in the hands of the state parliaments and I assume it would be a conscience vote in those parliaments.

LEIGH SALES: But if it is a conscience vote though and the public attitude is 75 per cent support, why would you not expect to see 75 per cent of parliamentarians supporting euthanasia if they genuine represented their communities?

MALCOLM TURNBULL: Well, Leigh, I don't know what 75 per cent of the members of the Victorian or the New South Wales parliaments believe on that issue.

I'm not aware of that issue being a live one in one of those parliaments. It may be.

LEIGH SALES: But nonetheless, what about my broader point that this is an issue that many, many Australians care very passionately about and we don't see any moves or agitation among mainstream politicians to do anything about it, state or federal?

MALCOLM TURNBULL: Well, Leigh, you've raised it and it is a fair point to raise but I didn't see it featured in any way in the last federal election here in Australia and I don't recall it being a feature in the presidential election in the United States.

The election we have just seen in the United States was overwhelmingly about jobs, about the economy, about investment, about border security.

One of the most fundamental issues in any society is to ensure that the borders are secure. People expect their government, their representatives, to determine who comes to their country.

They don't want their borders outsourced to a people smuggler, which of course is precisely what the Labor Party did when they were in government here for six years.

.....