

LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

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Getting straight on the vexed issue of the right to die

James Athanasou (Letters, May 17) seems to have got things the wrong way round in relation to the right to die proposal. It is the current law that intervenes inappropriately in our life and death on this issue by denying terminally ill people the right to die on their own terms without unnecessary suffering.

He is quite correct to state that such moral issues are not the preserve of government and that it is a matter for individuals not politicians to decide, but these principles should lead him to support not reject the proposal. Those who oppose euthanasia for religious or moral reasons need not avail themselves of it.

Maurice Gonsalves Elizabeth Bay

Anne Gabrielides' story is heart-wrenching. However, those who vote need to weigh up the pros and cons for the good of us all and while emotion has its place we should never let it cloud the bigger picture. Human beings are very good at getting around laws, so when it comes to euthanasia how can there ever be truly "safe" safeguards in place?

Julie Robinson Cardiff

James Athanasou is correct when he suggests that there may be "long-term unintended consequences" if the bill for the right to die goes ahead but, with all the limitations and safeguards put into it, that is hardly a reason not to. If mankind did not make changes for fear of unintended consequences, we would still be living in the Dark Ages. He also said that such moral issues are "a matter for the people to decide" and as polls consistently show that more than 70 per cent of people agree with "assisted dying in restricted circumstances", it would seem that the people have already spoken.

Peter Nash Fairlight