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Euthanasia a medical matter, not a police issue

Last year a good friend of mine had a terminal illness and was rapidly deteriorating in capacity ("Councillor's plea to MPs" Don't rob my dad of choice", May 29). An elderly and well-educated woman, she foresaw a horrid and incapacitated future for herself, and a huge burden on her family. She chose to attempt suicide in a place remote from her home so as not to implicate her family.

The outcome was that she died later in hospital with a large amount of police time expended on her "case". This raises a number of issues: she did not have access to a suitable method of suicide, she was deprived in her last waking hours of the comfort of her family and a lot of expensive police time was wasted.

This is all because our NSW Parliament is dominated by people who claim that euthanasia is a matter of conscience. No, it is a matter of religious indoctrination. If our MPs actually had consciences they would pass the bill for assisted dying, now before the house. This should be a medical matter not a police one.

Jan Aitkin Balmain

I applaud Linda Scott's public support for a change in the law to support her father's right to a dignified death in a manner and time he chooses instead of ending in chaotic, miserable, meaningless and unnecessary suffering. There are strong arguments in both morality and international law to support her position.

In 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously held that the rights to life, liberty and security of the person, which are entrenched in the Canadian constitution, require that people with a grievous and irremediable medical condition who are experiencing intolerable suffering should, with stringent safeguards, be able to choose to die with dignity and be given medical assistance to do so.

These rights are not specifically in the Australian constitution, but they are found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is viewed as an expression of fundamental values shared by Australia with all other members of the international community. Australia voted in favour of the Universal Declaration at the UN in 1948.

I would urge the lawmakers in NSW to consider the upcoming legislative proposals on assisted dying as reflective of fundamental human rights.

Patricia Loughlan Glebe

Compassion for the situations of Dr Scott and others like him is a compelling argument for his plea to have the option of assisted dying. Not to grant this condemns any of us who may face a similar situation or have witnessed a dreadful death to bear all the associated grief and costs involved. Surely it's a question of having the right to choose a peaceful death rather than one by ordeal.

Vicky Marquis Glebe