

Australians should have the right to choose assisted dying, groundbreaking report says

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Assisted death should be available to people with incurable and terminal illness who persistently request it. This is a key recommendation of a report from leading academics released today.

The [report](#) by [Australia21](#) (A21), a non-profit body committed to analysis of complex issues affecting Australia's future, calls on state governments to legislate for change and on the Federal Government to return to the territories their right to legalise assisted dying.

The report, "The right to choose an assisted death: Time for legislation?", was prepared after a roundtable discussion by opponents and supporters of assisted dying from the fields of medicine, law, ethics, palliative care and politics that was held in Brisbane in January in conjunction with QUT's Health Law Research Centre (HLRC).

HLRC director Professor Ben White from QUT's School of Law said the report considered reform of the currently illegal practices of voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide.

"The laws on voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide lack coherence and there is a body of evidence that shows they are not being followed," Professor White said.

"This area of the [law](#) should be reformed to respect choice, in line with community thinking."

The report's lead author Emeritus Professor Bob Douglas AO, founding chair of A21, said views on assisted dying were changing rapidly around the world.

"A number of jurisdictions around the world have decriminalised assisted dying and [voluntary euthanasia](#) and national polls in Australia show people want this option as they approach the end of their lives," Professor Douglas said.

The report is being sent to all state and federal parliamentarians and to professional and religious bodies around Australia.

The report can be downloaded [here](#).

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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