

06 January 2011

Survey results - attitudes to voluntary euthanasia

Methodology

In November 2010 the Australia Institute conducted an online survey of 1,294 Australians. Survey respondents were asked questions about a range of social issues, including their views on voluntary euthanasia.

Respondents were sourced from an independent online panel provider, and provided with a small incentive to encourage participation. To ensure that the survey was representative of the Australian population, quotas were applied by age, gender and territory, and data were post-weighted based on the profile of the adult Australian population.

Survey questions

Q1. This question is about voluntary euthanasia. If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?

- Yes, voluntary euthanasia should be legal
- No, voluntary euthanasia should be against the law
- Not sure

[If respondent says that voluntary euthanasia should be legal]

Q2. You said that voluntary euthanasia should be legal. In your view, should terminally ill patients also have the option of choosing the time when they die?

- Yes, terminally ill patients should be able to choose when they die, whether or not they are currently suffering
- No, terminally ill patients should not be able to choose when they die - this should be determined by a doctor
- Not sure

Results

Table 1: 'If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?' (by gender)

	Male	Female	All
Yes, voluntary euthanasia should be legal	73%	77%	75%
No, voluntary euthanasia should be against the law	15%	12%	13%
Not sure	12%	11%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Base=1,294

Table 2: 'If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?' (by age)

	18 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years or older	All
Yes, voluntary euthanasia should be legal	70%	73%	76%	78%	78%	73%	75%
No, voluntary euthanasia should be against the law	14%	11%	12%	11%	11%	21%	13%
Not sure	16%	15%	12%	11%	12%	7%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base=1,294

Table 3: 'If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?' (by voter type)

	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other	All
Yes, voluntary euthanasia should be legal	71%	79%	90%	66%	75%
No, voluntary euthanasia should be against the law	19%	8%	5%	18%	13%
Not sure	9%	13%	5%	16%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base=1,294

For media enquiries, please contact:

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Table 4: 'If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?' (by religion)

	Christian	Other religion	No religion	All
Yes, voluntary euthanasia should be legal	65%	62%	91%	75%
No, voluntary euthanasia should be against the law	20%	21%	2%	13%
Not sure	14%	17%	7%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base=1,294

Table 5: 'In your view, should terminally ill patients also have the option of choosing the time when they die?' (by gender)

	Male	Female	All
Yes, terminally ill patients should be able to choose when they die, whether or not they are currently suffering	83%	83%	83%
No, terminally ill patients should not be able to choose when they die - this should be determined by a doctor	13%	11%	12%
Not sure	5%	6%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Base=969. Includes respondents who said at Question 1 that voluntary euthanasia should be legal.

Table 6: 'In your view, should terminally ill patients also have the option of choosing the time when they die?' (by age)

	18 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years or older	All
Yes, terminally ill patients should be able to choose when they die, whether or not they are currently suffering	85%	81%	84%	82%	88%	80%	83%
No, terminally ill patients should not be able to choose when they die - this should be determined by a doctor	12%	12%	12%	10%	9%	16%	12%
Not sure	4%	7%	4%	9%	3%	4%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base=969. Includes respondents who said at Question 1 that voluntary euthanasia should be legal.

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Table 7: 'In your view, should terminally ill patients also have the option of choosing the time when they die?' (by voter type)

	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other	All
Yes, terminally ill patients should be able to choose when they die, whether or not they are currently suffering	83%	82%	85%	82%	83%
No, terminally ill patients should not be able to choose when they die - this should be determined by a doctor	14%	13%	8%	9%	12%
Not sure	3%	5%	8%	9%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base=969. Includes respondents who said at Question 1 that voluntary euthanasia should be legal.

Table 8: 'In your view, should terminally ill patients also have the option of choosing the time when they die?' (by religion)

	Christian	Other religion	No religion	All
Yes, terminally ill patients should be able to choose when they die, whether or not they are currently suffering	81%	85%	85%	83%
No, terminally ill patients should not be able to choose when they die - this should be determined by a doctor	14%	12%	10%	12%
Not sure	6%	3%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base=969. Includes respondents who said at Question 1 that voluntary euthanasia should be legal.