



Enhancing the News

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'Right-to-die' is a lifelong debate

The long-running euthanasia debate raises ethical, medical and religious concerns. The question remains: who should make decisions about when and how we die?

Euthanasia is the practice of intentionally ending the life of the terminally ill. Euthanasia advocates argue everyone has the right to decide their own fate. Opponents believe in a moral respect for human life, and fear that legalising the practice will lead to involuntary euthanasia.

A recent poll, published by The Age, found 84 per cent of more than 3000 respondents believe the terminally ill should have access to euthanasia. Yet assisted suicide remains illegal in Australia and offenders face a 14-year jail sentence.

In 1996, legalised euthanasia was introduced in the Northern Territory under the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act. However, the Federal Government overturned this in 1997. During this time, four people chose to die under the euthanasia legislation.

The euthanasia debate is complex. Help students understand with the [Do Not Resuscitate Series](#), which examines euthanasia and puts the Australian laws governing this practice to the test ([study guide](#) also available). [Insight: Last Rights](#) tackles the debate and asks if we should have the right to choose when we die and [Compass: The Promise](#) tells the story of one woman who became the face of the "ethical nightmare". While [Compass: The Farewell Party](#) reflects on the life choices of a terminal cancer patient who plans to travel overseas where voluntary euthanasia is legal, [Cutting Edge: Living Old](#) looks at how advanced medical procedures are enabling us to live longer, but not necessarily better. Also, the documentary, [Mademoiselle and the Doctor](#) (and its [partnering study guide](#)) will provoke thought and discussion with its powerful portrayal of the ethical and moral arguments raised by the euthanasia debate.
