

# Senator breaks down in euthanasia debate

Liberal senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells has made an emotional speech in parliament against legalising voluntary assisted dying in Australia's territories.

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A federal government minister has fought back tears in parliament during a voluntary assisted dying debate in which she recounted the death of her father.

Liberal senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells was speaking against Liberal Democrat David Leyonhjelm's private bill to restore Northern Territory and ACT laws giving people the right to end their own life.

She said her father had died from dementia.

"When I saw what he went through, particularly as an older person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, it is very, very difficult," the NSW senator said as she choked up.

"They're really the people in our society that I'm particularly concerned about because often they can't speak English really well."

Senator Fierravanti-Wells said taking a life was wrong legally and morally.

Greens senator Rachel Siewert spoke in favour of the bill, which seeks to repeal a 1997 federal law banning the ACT and NT from legislating to allow assisted suicide.

"This bill is about compassion and the right to end-of-life choices," Senator Siewert said.

"We are talking about terminally ill individuals who are experiencing unbearable suffering from an incurable illness."

Victoria has Australia's only legal voluntary assisted-dying scheme after passing controversial laws in November last year.

The territories have vowed to lobby the federal government to reinstate their euthanasia laws.

Debate on Senator Leyonhjelm's bill - first introduced to parliament in 2015 - was adjourned.

