

Monday, 13 November 2017

It's Official: Australians support assisted dying or euthanasia

It's Official: A large majority of Australians, 87% (up a significant 18% from May 1996) are in favour of 'letting patients die when they are hopelessly ill and experiencing unrelievable suffering with no chance of recovery' compared to 10% (down 7%) who say doctors should 'try to keep patients alive' and 3% (down 11%) who are undecided.

In addition a large majority of Australians, 85% (up 11% from May 1996) are in favour of allowing a doctor to 'give a lethal dose when a patient is hopelessly ill with no chance of recovery and asks for a lethal dose' compared to 15% (down 3%) who say a doctor should 'not be allowed to give a lethal dose'.

This special Roy Morgan Snap SMS Survey was conducted on the night of November 2, 2017 with a representative cross-section of 1,386 Australians aged 18+.

Questions:

*"A question on **hopelessly ill** people **experiencing unrelievable suffering**. If there's absolutely **no** chance of a patient recovering, should the doctor **let** the patient die – or should the doctor **try** to keep the patient alive as long as possible?"*

Respondents who answered were then asked: *"If a **hopelessly ill** patient with **no chance of recovering asks for** a lethal dose, should a doctor be allowed to **give** a lethal dose, or not?"*

Historical Trends: Should a doctor let a patient die?

In 1946, when Roy Morgan first asked this question the Australian population was divided. 42% said 'let the patient die', 41% said 'try to keep the patient alive' and 17% were undecided. Since then support has increased fairly consistently.

Since the last poll in 1996 there has been a substantial increase in support of letting patients die. Now 87% of respondents support 'letting patient die', up 18% since 1996.

	<u>Nov 1946</u>	<u>May 1955</u>	<u>Oct 1962</u>	<u>Nov 1978</u>	<u>Sep 1983</u>	<u>Apr 1986</u>	<u>Apr 1987</u>	<u>Apr 1989</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let patient die	42	53	54	60	65	68	67	66
Try to keep patient alive	41	38	32	23	18	16	21	20
Undecided	17	9	14	17	17	16	12	14
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	<u>Jul 1990</u>	<u>Jul 1991</u>	<u>Mar 1992</u>	<u>May 1993</u>	<u>May 1994</u>	<u>Jun 1995</u>	<u>May 1996</u>	<u>Nov 2017</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let patient die	71	69	73	73	71	71	69	87
Try to keep patient alive	19	21	18	15	13	15	17	10
Undecided	10	10	9	12	16	14	14	3
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis by Voting Preference: Should a doctor let a patient die?

Analysis of supporters of various political parties shows large majorities of supporters of all parties support 'letting the patient die' led by 91% of Greens voters, 88% of National voters 87% of ALP voters and 86% of Liberal voters.

	Total	Electors	Liberal	National	ALP	Greens	Other	Can't say
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let patient die	87	86	86	88	87	91	74	92
Try to keep patient alive	10	10	11	12	9	5	22	8
Undecided	3	4	3	-	4	4	4	-
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis by Gender & Age: Should a doctor let a patient die?

Analysing by gender shows that large majorities of women (89%) and men 84% are in favour of 'letting patients die and respondents of all age groups, especially older respondents, are in favour of 'letting patients die'.

	Total	Gender		Age				
		Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let patient die	87	84	89	87	78	88	89	90
Try to keep patient alive	10	11	9	9	16	9	8	9
Undecided	3	5	2	4	6	3	3	1
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis by State: Should a doctor let a patient die?

Analysis by state shows that a clear majority of all states are in favour of 'letting patients die'. 92% of Tasmanians 92% support 'letting patients die' but all other states and city and country areas are more than 80% in favour.

	Total	State						Region	
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	City	Country
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Let patient die	87	84	85	88	89	90	92	85	90
Try to keep patient alive	10	11	12	10	7	8	3	11	7
Undecided	3	5	3	2	4	2	5	4	3
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Historical Trends: Should a doctor be allowed to give a patient a lethal dose?

In 1962 when Roy Morgan first asked this question the population was divided – more favouring allowing a doctor to give a lethal dose (47%) than not (39%) and 14% undecided. Support increased consistently over the years to 1996.

There has also been a marked increase in support of allowing doctors ‘giving a lethal dose’ since the last survey in 1996. Now a large majority of 85% of respondents say a doctor should be allowed to ‘give a patient a lethal dose’ compared to 74% of respondents in 1996.

	Nov 1946	May 1955	Oct 1962	Nov 1978	Sep 1983	Apr 1986	Apr 1987	Apr 1989
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Give lethal dose	n/a	n/a	47	67	67	66	75	71
Not give lethal dose	n/a	n/a	39	22	21	21	18	20
Undecided	n/a	n/a	14	11	12	13	7	9
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	Jul 1990	Jul 1991	Mar 1992	May 1993	May 1994	Jun 1995	May 1996	Nov 2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Give lethal dose	77	73	76	78	78	78	74	85
Not give lethal dose	17	20	18	15	13	14	18	15
Undecided	6	7	6	7	9	8	8	-
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis by Voting Preference: Should a doctor be allowed to give a patient a lethal dose?

Analysis of supporters of various political parties shows 95% of Greens voters support allowing doctors to ‘give a lethal dose’ ahead of ALP voters on 87% and Liberal and National voters, both on 81%.

	Total	Electors	Liberal	National	ALP	Greens	Other	Can't say
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Give lethal dose	85	84	81	81	87	95	72	63
Not give lethal dose	15	16	19	19	13	5	28	37
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis by Gender & Age: Should a doctor be allowed to give a patient a lethal dose?

Analysing patterns by gender shows that a larger majority of women (86%) are in favour of allowing doctors ‘give a lethal dose’ compared to 83% of men.

Analysing by age group shows all age groups have large majorities in favour of allowing doctors to ‘give a lethal dose’ with 18-24yr olds (92%) the most in favour compared to those aged 65+ (81%).

	Total	Gender		Age				
		Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Give lethal dose	85	83	86	92	84	85	84	81
Not give lethal dose	15	17	14	8	16	15	16	19
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis by State: Should a doctor be allowed to give a patient a lethal dose?

Support for allowing doctors to 'give a lethal dose' is also consistent across the country with clear majorities in all six States in favour of allowing doctors to 'give a lethal dose' to patients. The State with the largest support is Western Australia in which 88% of respondents support allowing doctors to 'give a lethal dose'. All other states and city and country areas are over 80% in support of allowing doctors to 'give a lethal dose'.

	Total	State						Region	
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	City	Country
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Give lethal dose	85	82	86	86	88	83	85	83	88
Not give lethal dose	15	18	14	14	12	17	15	17	12
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Michele Levine, Chief Executive Officer, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"Australians have overwhelmingly backed the right of doctors to administer lethal doses to patients in a result that supports the Victorian Government's euthanasia legislation recently passed by both houses of the Victorian Parliament.*

"A large majority of 87% of Australians (up 18% since May 1996) say doctors should allow 'hopelessly ill patients experiencing unrelievable suffering to die' and almost as many, 85% (up 11% since May 1996) say doctors should be allowed to 'give a lethal dose' to a patient with no chance of recovering.

"Support for both contentions is exceedingly strong amongst supporters of all major political parties (above 80% for both questions), amongst both genders (above 80% for both questions), amongst all age groups (above 75% for both questions) and in all Australian States (above 80% for both questions).

"Although the question of euthanasia has always provoked a great deal of debate, the views of the Australian public has decisively moved in favour of the action over the last two decades.

"From the first surveys in the 1940s, 50s and 60s there was a consistent increase in support then between 1987 and 1996 support for doctors allowing hopelessly ill patients to die barely changed (67% in April 1987 cf. 69% in May 1996), while support for allowing doctors to administer a lethal dose actually dropped over the nine years to May 1996 (75% in April 1987 cf. 74% in May 1996).

"Today's results show that, although the Victorian euthanasia legislation is the first time an Australian State has passed legislation allowing euthanasia, the State Government is unlikely to suffer any political fallout from the move."

*Finding No. 7373 – This special Roy Morgan Snap SMS Survey was conducted as the Victorian Parliament debates contentious legislation concerning the potential legalisation of euthanasia. The survey was conducted on Thursday November 2, 2017 with a representative cross-section of 1,386 Australians. "A question on **hopelessly ill people experiencing unrelievable suffering**. If there's absolutely **no** chance of a patient recovering, should the doctor **let** the patient die – or should the doctor **try** to keep the patient alive as long as possible?" Respondents who answered were then asked: "If a **hopelessly ill patient with no chance of recovering asks for** a lethal dose, should a doctor be allowed to **give** a lethal dose, or not?"*

**To clarify the status of the Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill at the time this poll was conducted. The Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill has passed the Victorian Lower House and has passed its Second Reading in the Victorian Upper House. The bill now faces further amendments before the Third Reading. After the Third Reading the Bill will be passed into law with Governor's royal assent.*

For further information:

Contact	Office	Mobile
Gary Morgan:	+61 3 9224 5213	+61 411 129 094
Michele Levine:	+61 3 9224 5215	+61 411 129 093

Morgan Poll Accuracy — Recent Elections State & Federal (2006 – 2013)

The Morgan Poll has proven to be consistently the most accurate regular poll in recent Australian Elections — including the 2013 Federal Election, 2010 Federal Election, 2007 Federal Election, 2010 Victorian State Election & 2012 Queensland State Election.

The Morgan Poll was the most accurate of all polling companies at [the 2013 Federal Election](#) for the two-party preferred vote (L-NP: 53.5% cf. ALP 46.5%) (sample 4,937 electors).

The Morgan Poll was the most accurate of all polling companies at [the 2007 Federal Election](#) for both primary vote and two-party preferred predictions (sample 2,115 electors).

The Morgan Poll accurately predicted [that the ALP would win the 2006 Queensland Election with a reduced majority](#) (sample 604 electors).

The Morgan Poll accurately predicted [that the ALP would win the 2006 Victorian Election with a reduced majority](#) (sample 956 electors). The Morgan Poll was also the most accurate on the primary vote of the major parties for the Victorian election.

Note: The [discussion on Possum Pollytics](#) regarding Morgan and Newspoll is well worth reading.

The following included comment says it all: “I find it interesting that for the only poll in the last five years for which there is any ‘real’ figure with which to compare, i.e. the polls immediately before the 2004 election, Morgan (45.5%) was closer to the actual Coalition Primary (46.7%) than Newspoll (45%) or Nielsen (49%), and Morgan (38.5%) was also closer to the ALP actual primary (37.6%) than Newspoll (39%), and only marginally further away than Nielsen (37%). Since we have no idea of how far away the ongoing polls are from ‘reality’ (whatever that means), surely we should just go with what we know, that in the most recent testable case, Morgan was better at forecasting the actual primary vote than Newspoll. On what possible basis should we decide that the Newspoll or Nielsen primary vote estimate is ‘better’ than Morgan’s.”

[View Federal Voting Intention Trend](#)**Margin of Error**

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. The following table gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. The figures are approximate and for general guidance only, and assume a simple random sample. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
1,000	±3.2	±2.7	±1.9	±1.4