

The Ethics of Voluntary Assisted Dying: Promoting Constructive Debate

The Australian Research Council has awarded Professor Stephen Clarke; Professor Julian Savulescu; Professor Jeanette Kennett; and Dr Xavier Symons \$553,139.00 to undertake Discovery Project DP240102614: The Ethics of Voluntary Assisted Dying: Promoting Constructive Debate. The Project Commenced on 1 July 2024.

Details of project outcomes will be posted on this webpage as they emerge.

Project Summary

This project aims to analyze core concepts that play key roles in emerging debates about the ethics of Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) in Australia. The project expects to make constructive contributions to these debates, promoting respectful dialogue and reducing polarization. Expected outcomes include a new model for managing VAD in Australia which is ethically appropriate and consistent with community values. This model will also benefit other countries where the ethics of VAD is under consideration. The project will promote the dignity and autonomy of all and ensure that issues about the conscientious refusal of healthcare professionals to participate in the provision of VAD are handled in an ethically appropriate and effective manner.

Project Participants:

Steve Clarke is Professor of Philosophy in the School of Social Work and Arts, at Charles Sturt University, and a Research Associate of the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics. He is Director of the Master of Ethics and Legal Studies at Charles Sturt University and Research Lead of the Charles Sturt University Sturt Scheme-funded Future of the Professions Research Group.

Jeanette Kennett is Emeritus Professor in Philosophy at Macquarie University, Sydney. After completing her PhD in 1994 she spent a further ten years in the Philosophy Department at Monash as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer. From 2004 – 2008 she was Principal Research Fellow in The Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the Australian National University and also at Charles Sturt University (2008-9). She joined Macquarie in 2009. She is an elected fellow of both the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

Jessie McDonnell is working on a Masters dissertation funded by the Project. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from Charles Sturt University.

Julian Savulescu is the Chen Su Lan Professor in Medical Ethics at the National University of Singapore, where he directs the Centre for Biomedical Ethics. An award-winning ethicist and moral philosopher, he trained in neuroscience, medicine, and philosophy, going on to hold the Uehiro Chair in Practical Ethics (2002) at the University of Oxford, where he founded the

Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics in 2003, before moving to NUS in 2022. He co-directs the Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities. He is Distinguished Visiting Professorial Fellow at Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Melbourne Law School, where he directs the Biomedical Ethics Research Group.

Xavier Symons is Director of the Plunkett Centre for Ethics at ACU. Xavier previously worked as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Human Flourishing Program in the Institute for Quantitative Social Science at Harvard University and prior to this was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Plunkett Centre and a Research Associate at the Institute for Ethics and Society at the University of Notre Dame Australia. He has lectured in bioethics at the University of Technology Sydney Faculty of Law and at the University of Notre Dame Australia Medical School.