

**ACTIVITY B: Margin of Error**

# MEDIA RELEASE : October 2016

**Should euthanasia be legalised in New Zealand?**

# The issue:

It has been over a year since the passing of Lecretia Seales. A proponent of euthanasia legislation, Lecretia fought a legal battle in 2015 to allow her doctor to end her life without prosecution after she was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Lecretia’s story sparked a nationwide discourse about euthanasia. Although the issue surrounding euthanasia legalisation in New Zealand has been around for a few years, in recent months euthanasia has received increased media attention.

A recent petition, which has reached 22,000 signatures, is asking for this issue to be put to Parliament once again. Pro-euthanasia groups have also featured in the media in connection with arrests due to possession of drugs that are used in euthanasia in countries where assisted dying is legal. Arguments for and against euthanasia have come from healthcare workers, lawyers, politicians, people with terminal illnesses and the general public.

In order to gauge public opinion and support for the legalisation of euthanasia, Research New Zealand conducted a poll between 24 June and 15 July 2015 with a nationally representative sample of adult New Zealanders. We repeated the same poll between 04 October and 22 October 2016.

# The poll questions:

1. *Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient’s life, if the patient requests it?*
2. *Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, such as a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient’s life, if the patient requests it?*

# Comment:

“We now have two comparable measures, approximately one year apart, with more or less the same results. The messages are clear. With about three times as many people in support as not, New Zealanders are clearly in favour of assisted euthanasia where a doctor is involved. In contrast, there is no clear majority for assisted euthanasia where others (non-professionals) are involved,” said Research New Zealand Director Emanuel Kalafatelis.

*The Research New Zealand poll of 501 people aged 18 years and over was conducted by telephone between 04 October and 22 October 2016. The maximum margin of error is +/- 5.2 percent (at the 95 percent confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand. The polls were not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand’s monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.*

# TABULATIONS

**Table 1: Agreement that it should be legal for doctors to assist with euthanasia**

*Q1. Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | June/July 2015 | October 2016 |
| Unweighted base = | 500 | 501 |
|  | % | % |
| Yes | 67 | 65 |
| No | 24 | 22 |
| Don't know | 9 | 13 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 2: Agreement that it should be legal for other people, such as close relatives, to assist with euthanasia**

*Q2. Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, such as a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | June/July 2015 | October 2016 |
| Unweighted base = | 500 | 501 |
|  | % | % |
| Yes | 44 | 43 |
| No | 48 | 46 |
| Don't know | 8 | 11 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Results by demographic sub-groups**

**Table 3: Agreement by gender that it should be legal for doctors to assist with euthanasia**

*Q1. Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | Male | Female |
| Base = | 501 | 232 | 269 |
|  | % | % | % |
| Yes | 65 | 67 | 62 |
| No | 22 | 21 | 23 |
| Don't know | 13 | 11 | 15 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 4: Agreement by age that it should be legal for doctors to assist with euthanasia**

*Q1. Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 61 | 129 | 311 |
|  | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 65 | 61 | 66 | 67 |
| No | 22 | 23 | 22 | 22 |
| Don't know | 13 | 16 | 12 | 11 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 5: Agreement by income that it should be legal for doctors to assist with euthanasia**

*Q1. Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | Under  $40,000 | $40,000-  $80,000 | $80,000+ | Don't know/ Refused |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 157 | 125 | 163 | 56 |
|  | % | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 65 | 63 | 67 | 66 | 63 |
| No | 22 | 24 | 22 | 21 | 20 |
| Don't know | 13 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 17 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding

**Table 6: Agreement by highest qualification that it should be legal for doctors to assist with euthanasia**

*Q1. Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | None/No qualifications | Secondary school qualification | Polytechnic or trade qualification | Bachelor’s degree or higher |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 58 | 147 | 128 | 167 |
|  | % | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 65 | 78 | 68 | 71 | 55 |
| No | 22 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 28 |
| Don't know | 13 | 4 | 13 | 10 | 17 |
| Don't care | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 7: Agreement by ethnicity that it should be legal for doctors to assist with euthanasia**

*Q1. Suppose a person has a painful, incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | NZ European | Maori | Other |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 381 | 63 | 74 |
|  | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 65 | 66 | 62 | 60 |
| No | 22 | 20 | 26 | 23 |
| Don't know | 13 | 14 | 12 | 17 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 8: Agreement by gender that it should be legal for other people, like close relatives, to assist with euthanasia**

*Q2. Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, like a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | Male | Female |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 232 | 269 |
|  | % | % | % |
| Yes | 43 | 42 | 44 |
| No | 46 | 48 | 43 |
| Don't know | 11 | 10 | 12 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 9: Agreement by age that it should be legal for other people, like close relatives, to assist with euthanasia**

*Q2. Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, like a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 61 | 129 | 311 |
|  | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 43 | 53 | 41 | 39 |
| No | 46 | 35 | 48 | 50 |
| Don't know | 11 | 13 | 11 | 10 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 10: Agreement by income that it should be legal for other people, like close relatives, to assist with euthanasia**

*Q2. Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, like a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | Under  $40,000 | $40,000-  $80,000 | $80,000+ | Don't know/ Refused |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 157 | 125 | 163 | 56 |
|  | % | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 43 | 48 | 40 | 44 | 34 |
| No | 46 | 42 | 48 | 46 | 47 |
| Don't know | 11 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 19 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 11: Agreement by highest qualification that it should be legal for other people, like close relatives, to assist with euthanasia**

*Q2. Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, like a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | None/no qualifications | Secondary school qualification | Polytechnic or trade qualification | Bachelor’s degree or higher |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 58 | 147 | 128 | 167 |
|  | % | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 43 | 58 | 48 | 41 | 37 |
| No | 46 | 36 | 42 | 46 | 51 |
| Don't know | 11 | 5 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| Don't care | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 12: Agreement by ethnicity that it should be legal for other people, like close relatives, to assist with euthanasia**

*Q2. Still thinking of that person with a painful, incurable disease, do you think that someone else, like a close relative, should be allowed by law to help end the patient's life, if the patient requests it?*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October 2016 | NZ European | Mäori | Other |
| Unweighted base = | 501 | 381 | 63 | 74 |
|  | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 43 | 40 | 53 | 38 |
| No | 46 | 48 | 39 | 50 |
| Don't know | 11 | 11 | 7 | 11 |
| Don't care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Some respondents identify with more than one ethnicity