

**Government response to the petition of Social Justice Aotearoa:  
Amend the End of Life Choice Act 2019 to include degenerative  
disease**

**Presented to the House of Representatives**

**In accordance with Standing Orders 380, 381 and 382**

## **Introduction**

- 1 The Government has carefully considered the petition: “Amend the End of Life Choice Act 2019 to include degenerative disease”.
- 2 The Government responds to the petitioner in accordance with standing order 380. This response is tabled in accordance with standing orders 381 and 382.

## **Request from petitioner**

- 3 Under section 5 of the End of Life Choice Act 2019, one of the eligibility criteria for euthanasia is that a person “suffers from a terminal illness that is likely to end that person’s life within 6 months”.
- 4 The petitioner asks the House of Representatives to amend the End of Life Choice Act 2019 by removing the words “within 6 months” from section 5(1)(c) and inserting a new subsection providing that people are eligible for euthanasia who suffer from a degenerative disease that will ultimately end their life.

## **Response**

- 5 The End of Life Choice Act 2019 (the Act) is the law that makes euthanasia legal in New Zealand. The Act came into force on 7 November 2021, following a public referendum held alongside the 2020 General Election. The Act is administered by the Ministry of Health.
- 6 Given the range of differing views among New Zealanders on the matter, the Government will not be proposing any changes to the Act. This decision reflects the complexity of the issue and the wide range of opinions held by New Zealanders across the country.
- 7 The Coalition Agreement between the New Zealand National Party and ACT Party confirms that any changes to the Act are to be progressed by way of a member’s bill, recognising that New Zealanders hold differing views and that this is a conscience issue.