

Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON END-OF-LIFE CHOICES — ESTABLISHMENT

Standing Orders Suspension — Government Business — Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.34 pm]: I move —

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the private members' business notice of motion relating to the Joint Select Committee on End-of-Life Choices to be moved and dealt with during the time when government business has precedence.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [12.35 pm]: I would like to make a few comments on the motion to suspend standing orders. I understand that the government is seeking to suspend standing orders because it wants to use government time to debate a private member's bill. No doubt the issue to be examined by the proposed Joint Select Committee on End-of-Life Choices is vital. It will deal with issues of life and death—essentially humanity. I have a few questions. First, why is this not a government-led process? The bill is being led by the member for Morley, and that is perfectly her right, but the committee will be examining a legitimate issue, and the member for Morley is also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and to cabinet. I assume that the matter has been discussed in cabinet, so I would like to know, if it has been discussed in cabinet, whether cabinet took a position on the substantive aspects of the terms of reference—in other words, is it a cabinet-led process?

Mr P. Papalia: Is this about the suspension, or isn't it?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No, the suspension of standing orders motion arises solely because debate on a private member's bill will be taking place during government time. I am asking: why is this not part of the government process? I think that is a legitimate question.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I will answer it.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I am sure the Leader of the House will answer that, particularly given the member for Morley's executive role, both as a Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and as she sits in cabinet, obviously. I think that an issue of such importance, as this matter is, would need cabinet support.

Victoria has just gone through and finished a similar process. We are starting from a broader point, and I assume that we will address the same set of issues that were addressed in Victoria, but in Victoria it was a government-led process and there was a standing committee. I respect the need to have both houses involved and to therefore have a joint committee—that is the appropriate place—but I wanted to know why the government was not directing this. Why is it not the government, first, directing it and giving the terms of reference for a joint select committee? I would also like to know whether cabinet has taken a position on the matter? Has cabinet discussed the matter? Has cabinet given its imprimatur to the terms of reference?

We will participate in the process, and we will put forward some amendments, which we will address in the substantive debate after this motion to suspend standing orders. There are two sections and I ask members to consider those two sections. That is the major issue. The motion is to suspend standing orders so that we can debate a motion on a very relevant issue, but it has to be treated very carefully. I just want to make some comments. A lot of the legislation that we are going to debate after a six-week recess is not very heavyweight. It appears to me that the government has not put a very large legislative agenda in front of us to warrant five months' work after coming into government—but that is a side issue.

I would like to know, first, has cabinet discussed this issue; second, has cabinet been involved in the drafting of the terms of reference, the selection of the Labor members on it, which we have been provided; and, has the government considered setting up a joint select committee under the terms of reference provided by the government? In particular, given the member for Morley's executive role, I think that would have been the correct way to do it. If the government has not done that, why not?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr R.S. Love): Just before the Leader of the House speaks, as he has moved this motion, him speaking will terminate the debate. Are there any other members who would like to speak to this motion?

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [12.39 pm]: I also want to speak to this motion. I think it is highly unusual that, in government business time, it is being proposed that we debate a private members' motion that was moved by somebody who is effectively a member of the executive as well. It is important because we are dealing with an extraordinarily sensitive issue. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated, the opposition is keen to participate in this process, to participate in the proposed committee that would be set up under this motion, and to fully examine all the issues relating to the possible introduction of euthanasia legislation in Western Australia. We want to look at the consequences and the potential impacts it will have on the community, and perhaps look at the sorts of

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safeguards that would need to be introduced, and also look at all the issues that are appearing in jurisdictions in which similar legislation has already been introduced. In some jurisdictions it has been in operation for enough time to be able to draw some conclusions. That would work best if it were to be done on a bipartisan and multi-party basis. It would work best if it were to be initiated by an actual private members' resolution, as has happened in many other states. The fact that the motion has been moved by the secretary to the cabinet, the member for Morley, and has been moved during government time, may indicate to the public and to the Parliament that this is a government proposal. There is nothing wrong with that; governments often refer matters to committees, but if the government is to establish a committee for this particular purpose, it is best to do it, from the outset, with absolute and utter clean hands and without prejudging the process.

We are not debating the merits of a committee at all, at this stage; we will do that at the appropriate time. We know that the government has an overwhelming majority and that, on the numbers, it can do this today; but we, as an opposition, are flagging caution around this sort of process. There are significant community concerns about the area that the proposed inquiry and committee will look into. There is no community unanimity; there is significant polarisation between areas of our community around this topic already, before the inquiry looks into it. We, as legislators, should be looking at bringing the community together, actually trying to avoid polarisation, having a mature discussion about things, and looking at all the issues.

In many ways, an ideal process for this would be if Parliament had jointly sponsored motions, to indicate that unanimity from the start, and to indicate the good faith and goodwill of the Parliament. Bringing this motion into the house in this way and then adopting it as government business risks—I say “risks”; I am not indicating that it is so—the perception that this is a government initiative. It risks the perception that the government has a clearly predetermined agenda on this topic. Even before the committee is established and the inquiry is on foot, there are question marks about the government's intention. If the government's intention is to introduce legislation in this area, it should do so. Government time is to introduce legislation and debate it. If that is the intention of the government, it should do so. It should not use the process of government business to somehow or other pretend that this is a genuine inquiry. Private members' business should be allowed to be dealt with in private members' business time and government time should be taken up by government time—government bills. The opposition seeks clarity here. We seek clarity whether this is government business or not. Parliament being asked to endorse a government initiative is a very different kettle from the Parliament itself using its own processes—which it has, and it uses from time to time—to establish a committee and commence an inquiry. They are two very different processes.

Clearly, if the government is embracing this, this is government business. This is a government motion brought on in government time to lead to a particular governmental policy outcome. The question is whether the government already has a policy position on this. If it has a policy position on this, it is certainly not a unanimous policy on government benches, and nor should it be. Governments are able to have internal debates and discussions—oppositions are too—but the government should not pretend that this is some sort of organically developed parliamentary inquiry. It has happened in other jurisdictions. Victoria is a classic example. Its crossbench introduced the motion to have an inquiry. There was an inquiry and then that process ended up going where it went in Victoria. That is clearly not the case here. This is not coming from the crossbench or from the opposition; this is coming from government. This is a government motion moved in government time. There is a clear perception—perception is nine-tenths of reality—that the government already has a policy in this area that effectively makes the inquiry either completely irrelevant and useless or, at very best, makes it narrow. If the government already has a policy position in this very vital and important area, all the committee will really be inquiring into is the nuts and bolts of how. The question whether we ought to go down this path seems to have already been answered in the eyes of the government. It should not hoodwink the public. What the government will do today—it has the numbers to do it—sends a very clear message that the government has already arrived at a policy position and is creating a parliamentary inquiry partly to give it the veneer of cross-party respectability and partly to inquire into the nuts and bolts of how best to go down this policy path that it has embarked upon. I tend to think that that is not a good thing. Others would probably use stronger language, but I do not think that that is a good thing for Parliament generally. It debases the role of Parliament and of parliamentary committees. I will have more to say on the substantive motion when we debate it. Couching the motion in these terms and bringing it in as government business is going down a preordained path; it is tying at least one hand of the Parliament behind its back. I am extraordinarily disappointed that that is happening because it is quite clear that some viewpoints are not welcome in this debate. Once again, the government is attempting to have half a debate in which the legitimate voices of those who may have concerns about the policy direction are silenced and any inquiry report will essentially be a whitewash to cover up the fact that the government has already determined a pathway it wants to go down, and the parliamentary inquiry is essentially a fig leaf covering up the fact that this is government policy. I urge the government to reconsider the way it is treating the parliamentary inquiry process.

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If the government wants to have a legitimate parliamentary inquiry that looks at all the options, it should move the motion outside government business time, which should be used to debate government legislation.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Do you want to give up all your opposition private members' time? Then you'll bellyache about that.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: If the government does not have any legislation, it should go and get some. There is plenty of urgent business to be done. That is all I will say on that. I urge the government to reconsider the process that it has gone down, because it is leaving a perception that the pathway is already preordained and that the findings of the inquiry already seem to be guided down one pathway. That is not open debate; that is not what parliamentary inquiries ought to be all about. Hopefully, we can step back for a moment and reconsider how we do that to send the right perception to the community that all viewpoints will be legitimately considered, and then we can have a mature debate about a topic that, as I said right from the outset, we as parliamentarians should be aiming to bring people together on, rather than precipitating the existing divisions in the community.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe) [12.53 pm]: I have been here a long time. In the last year of the previous Parliament, the Labor Party in opposition was suspending standing orders once or twice a week. It was an abuse of the process, but that is history.

Mr F.M. Logan: What?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was; Labor suspended them all the time. Every week the opposition would suspend standing orders. Now it is in government. In a motion suspending standing orders for any significant issue—the issue of euthanasia is clearly significant in the community—for no government member to stand up and make the case for suspending standing orders is absolutely extraordinary. I have never seen anything like that in the 27 years I have been a member of Parliament. The Leader of the House simply stood up, read out the motion and sat down. No case has been made at all for why standing orders should be suspended. Is any member opposite actually going to stand up and make the case for suspending standing orders?

Mr D.A. Templeman: The Premier will.

Mr M. McGowan: I am happy to.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Is the Premier going to do that? He was not in here.

Mr M. McGowan: You've got the call.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I know, and I am making my point.

Mr M. McGowan: Make your points.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I shall, because this is unprecedented. The member who moves the suspension of standing orders should always make the case, but he did not do it. The questions already raised by this side of the house are important. Did cabinet endorse this motion that has been moved by the member for Morley? No answer? Fair enough. Did cabinet discuss the motion moved by the member for Morley? No answer? Fair enough. Did cabinet select the names of the people nominated for it? No answer?

Ms R. Saffioti: We're not telling you anyway.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is a response: "I'm not telling you anyway." That is the response from a cabinet minister. She will not tell me anyway.

Ms R. Saffioti: You don't release business cases that were in cabinet five years ago.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We are talking about euthanasia, which is a very important issue to many people in our community, and it does not deserve to be trivialised. I suspect from the silence opposite and from having been in this place for a long time that there would certainly have been a discussion in cabinet. There is nothing particularly wrong with that but the point that has been made by members before me is: what position has cabinet taken?

If the government were genuine in this, it would treat it as a private member's bill, as it was moved by the member for Morley. If it thinks that there will not be adequate time in private members' time to debate it, the appropriate motion would have been to extend private members' time so that it could genuinely be treated as a private member's bill. The government is confusing this issue and I put forward—I think this point has already been made—that, in effect, this is a de facto Labor Party bill. The government is not willing to tell the community that this is the Labor Party position. Maybe it is not a formally adopted position, but I suspect that the government has agreed that it wants to pursue the issue of euthanasia. It recognises that some members of the Labor Party would have a moral objection to that so it has given them an escape clause, which is, in a sense, appropriate. Liberal Party members do not need that because Liberal Party members always have the right to vote how they see an issue. The

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government should be honest with the electorate. If it wants to pursue euthanasia—many people in the community would support that—it should be honest; it has brought it in through a private member's bill. I know that the private member concerned is very committed to this cause. The government should treat this Parliament properly and, if it wants to do it, it should leave it as a private member's bill and extend or create additional hours of private members' time to treat it properly. It cannot do both; it cannot have a private member's bill that is effectively sponsored as a government bill.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's a motion.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The motion is to suspend standing orders and the government has not argued for that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's not a bill.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, it is a motion. But motions are the same thing in many respects.

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, they're not.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Do not get into triviality.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Euthanasia is important to the people of this state. Do not make fun of it.

Ms R. Saffioti: You are making a mockery of this.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I am not.

The government has a responsibility for making a case for suspending standing orders. It brought it in as a private member's bill but now it is treating it as a pseudo government bill. It should make up its mind and treat the process properly. If the government expects us on this side to show good faith on what is an important social issue, it should show good faith in the way it deals with it. Is it government policy or is it a private member's solely created initiative?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Absolutely.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is government policy, is it?

Mr D.A. Templeman: No. It's a private member's motion.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: So why is it being done in government time if it is a private member's bill?

Mr D.A. Templeman: For the same reason that you allowed Graham Jacobs to bring in a motion of his willing.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: He brought it on in private members' time and we extended private members' time. Does this government see what it has done now? By this action it has immediately politicised the issue of euthanasia.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [12.58 pm]: I am sorry that I was not here for the earlier part of this debate but I have just been briefed on what was said. I want to outline to members opposite what has occurred here. The member for Morley was in contact with the Leader of the Opposition in writing, as I understand it, in early July to propose a way forward on this issue. As I understand it, she has also had discussions with members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and, I think, the Parliamentary National Party so that there would be a cooperative approach to setting up a committee to examine this issue, which I thought was the right way to go about this issue. She consulted me about that and I thought that was the right way to go about it. It is obviously a controversial issue; everyone here has their views. Some people, no doubt, are very fixed in their views. Other people may well be swayed by the debate or the nature of any bill should one subsequently come forward. The member for Morley was in contact before the parliamentary break on the basis that after the break a motion would be put forward to establish a select committee that would comprise members from across the parties and from both houses to examine the issues and listen to community feedback across Western Australia, and at the end of that process potentially come up with a bill that the Parliament could examine. Personally, I think that is the right way to go forward with this issue; I thought that was appropriate. I will run through the various points that I am advised were made by members of the Liberal Party. The first was: why did the member for Morley give notice to move a motion for the establishment of a joint select committee? She is a person who has served in both chambers. She understands the nuances of the upper house—many of us do not—and she has served in this chamber now for five months and so has that connection between both houses. She knows the people in the upper house and can work across the two houses. As we all know, sometimes members in this place do not know the people in the upper house particularly well and we do not understand the way that place works. I thought she was an appropriate person. She is not a minister, so she does not have that responsibility; however, she is a senior person in the Parliament in many ways, with her current responsibilities and the fact that she was in both houses.

The second point was: why is it being conducted now on Wednesday at midday? Again, that is because the government did not want to take up the opposition's time. I suspect that if we had come here at four o'clock today

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and next Wednesday and taken opposition time to deal with this issue, members opposite would be very angry—probably rightfully so—because they would want to raise whatever matters they see as issues they can take up against the government. We did not want to take their time. We thought it was appropriate that the opposition had its allocated time to raise the issues over which it wanted to prosecute the government politically and we did not take that away from them. I am a bit befuddled that the opposition is arguing now that we should take their time to do this. If they want us to take their time—if that is their argument—we are more than happy to adjourn the debate now and bring it back on at four o'clock. If they would like the house to sit until such time as the matter is dealt with tonight, I am more than happy to sit here until it is dealt with. All members opposite have to do at the end of my speech is to stand up and say that they want us to do that. We will adjourn the debate and move it to four o'clock today and sit tonight until whatever point in time it is finally decided.

In relation to the idea that this has never been done before, I point out that in the course of the last few years what is called government time was used—for new members, “government time” is now—to debate two private members' bills, one introduced by Dr Graham Jacobs, the Limitation Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse Actions) Bill in 2015, and one introduced by Shane Love, the member for Moore, the Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill in 2014. Government time was used for two private members' bills during the last four years.

They are the arguments. I know that people want to play politics with anything and everything. This issue is out there in the community. It has been raised with me, particularly by an older cohort of people who are concerned about their end-of-life choices. I personally agree with them; other people in my caucus do not. That is why we have a very fixed decision that they have a conscience vote on this issue and every person on this side of the house can make their own decision on how they want to vote. If they do not want to vote for the establishment of the committee, I suppose they will not. If a bill relating to end of life subsequently comes forward and they do not want to vote for it, they will not. I think that is a fair position; that is Labor's position. The Liberal Party and National Party will probably end up with the same way forward because it is not really an issue that divides people ideologically in any way: it is an issue of people's own morality and their views of life and death. It is entirely fair that we establish a committee so we get the points of view of the entire community and every member of Parliament so that the Parliament itself comes forward at the end of the day with legislation that may well have broad support. That is what I would like to occur.

I did not want the motion to end up this way with all of this debate. That was not the intention and I really do not understand it. I hoped that this might be an issue on which there was broad agreement; it is a matter of public importance and the Parliament should join forces to come up with a way forward. There will be Liberal Party members and National Party members on the committee. Who knows, there might be Pauline Hanson's One Nation members and Greens members on the committee. I think that is entirely fair and reasonable. I really do not understand why this has happened. There is nothing more to it, but we are happy to move the motion to four o'clock today if that is what the opposition would like and we will sit tonight until the matter is resolved because that is what the member for Cottesloe, the most senior member of this Parliament, has just suggested. We are more than happy —

Mr C.J. Barnett: No I didn't; I didn't say that at all. I didn't suggest we deal with it tonight. I didn't suggest that at all.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am more than happy to. Member for Cottesloe, we are not trying to undermine the Liberal Party, undermine you, or anything. All we are trying to do is deal with an issue that is out in the community. If the opposition does not want Parliament to deal with it, then it should say so, but I do not think that coming up with these arguments, which are clearly wrong, is a way to prosecute it.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [1.05 pm]: I rise to clarify some of the opposition's concerns with this process. To clarify what the member for Cottesloe said, if this is a government policy and it is a government-driven agenda, why is legislation not being drafted, brought to this place and referred to a parliamentary committee in the normal parliamentary process?

As a private member's bill —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can I finish my remarks? For the minister's information, this is a particularly important issue for me and I would like to have my say.

Point of Order

Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is on her feet trying to make her points and cabinet ministers on the front bench are interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Yes. Thank you. Please allow the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to finish her remarks without interjections.

Debate Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is a really important issue that goes to the heart of the values of people in our community and, as such, I have no objection to a parliamentary committee examining it. The opposition is curious because the Premier has said in the community and the media that he supports voluntary euthanasia. Normally if the leader of the government supports a particular position, they will bring the position to cabinet and talk about bringing legislation to Parliament for debate. If the legislation needs referral to a standing committee of Parliament—many are already established—then that is the process. If it is a controversial issue, it may well go through that process; the legislation will be drafted, then debated in the chamber and referred to a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly. The legislation will then be referred to the Legislative Council where it will go through a similar process and come back to this place. The legislation will then either be passed or not. That is the process. Ordinarily, if the leader of a state has a particular policy position on an issue, it will go through the cabinet process, and if cabinet agrees, the legislation will move from there. The opposition is curious about this process and my concern is that the community is very cynical about political processes. It deserves to be cynical because when a leader has a particular view about a divisive issue, the best thing to do as a politician is to pack it off to a committee and try to share the decision-making process with a cross-section of Parliament. This will take away an individual's decisiveness and mean their policy position does not starkly stand out to be criticised by the community. That is why we are dubious of this process.

It is the government's prerogative to suspend standing orders to debate this motion today. The government has the time and I do not have a problem with that process. It is appropriate to suspend standing orders to debate the establishment of a select committee. Ordinarily, a government-sponsored bill will consume government time and the government can say it will make time for private members' business to take precedence over government business to debate particular issues. However, as the member for Cottesloe said, if this motion is not a government-driven agenda, why not suspend standing orders to allow an extra hour or two hours for private members' business in addition to the time the opposition would ordinarily expect—three hours on Wednesday—to allow for this motion to be debated in an appropriate fashion in an extended private members' business? This is not a government-sponsored motion but a motion driven by a member in this place. As we have said, any member has the opportunity to bring these motions and bills forward in private members' time. We think it would be more appropriate to have a motion to suspend standing orders to extend private members' business and to allocate that time to the member for Morley to put her motion on establishing a select committee to this place. It is curious that we have a Premier with a view on this issue, a private member's motion that is being supported in government time, but the government does not appear to want to take ownership of the establishment of this select committee. That is the point that the opposition is making.

It is a really important issue and I would expect that if government-sponsored legislation to establish new laws around end-of-life choices was brought to this place, it would likely encounter vigorous debate and be referred to a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly and one in the other place. That is a general process. We are highlighting that this is a peculiar process and that other options were available to the government. Yes, when we were in government, we allowed debate on private members' bills in government time, but that was because the government had some sympathy with and, indeed, some support for the matters being debated. I was particularly proud to be part of a Parliament that allowed debate on the member for Kimberley's bill for the recognition of Indigenous people in the Constitution. That was a private member's bill. The government supported the intent of the bill and allocated government time to debate it. That is a different matter entirely. The government has not said whether it is supportive of new legislation on end-of-life choices—the Premier has; instead, it has decided to establish this joint select committee.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Members!

Mr P. Papalia: Did you move this, Bill?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It is a motion, member.

Mr P. Papalia: I was talking to Bill Marmion.

Several members interjected.

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The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is giving her remarks. Member for Warnbro, if you wish to contribute afterwards, you will have the opportunity.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will not labour the point. It is great to see government members in hysterics over a very serious issue.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I am going to call you to order for the first time. Can you please be quiet whilst the member is giving her contribution.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have no further comments, except, in conclusion, to highlight that we believe it is a peculiar process around an important issue that the Premier is clearly passionate about. That is all I have to say. I think I have made my point quite clearly that there are other processes that the government could have put in place to allow for debate on the member for Morley's motion. The government chose a different path notwithstanding the Premier's clear view on this issue. We will move on. The Leader of the Opposition has some further comments—he cannot speak. On behalf the opposition I will conclude our remarks and we will move to debate the substantive motion.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [1.14 pm]: I had not intended to speak in this debate because I thought that there had been some discussions across the chamber and that a path forward had been agreed on in some form. We are asking what is the proposed way forward; that is, what proposal has been outlined by the opposition? I understand that discussions are being held now, but this was never meant to be a political debate; this is a procedural matter about establishing a committee to investigate a very serious issue in the community. Select committees have often been used for this purpose because these issues are very sensitive in the community and we want to make sure that there is broad representation and consultation. This is a serious procedural matter. We do not actually understand why the opposition has chosen about four different positions on this matter. It is obvious that we really do not know whom from the opposition we should negotiate with to get these matters sorted because it is obvious that the manager of opposition business is sometimes not consulted about the opposition's negotiating strategies.

We have brought forward a very clear matter. We believe that this is an issue of community concern and that community consultation is required. A select committee has often been used in the past to discuss matters of sensitivity and significant community interest. This was never intended to be a political debate. I am not sure why the other side chose to do this. We could have dealt with it by now and the process could be underway. My understanding from the Leader of the House is that there is now an agreed path forward.

Mr D.A. Templeman: We hope; it might change.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We think there is because, again, we are not quite sure what happens on the other side of the house. I think the opposition is still trying to sort out who is doing what on its side. I understand that there is now an agreed way forward so I will let the Leader of the House deal with it.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [1.16 pm] — in reply: For just on an hour we have debated a motion that was moved to suspend standing orders. I remind everyone in the house that notice of this motion has been on the books for some time; it has been on the notice paper for some time. This is nothing new. A motion for the establishment of a joint select committee on end-of-life choices has not been foisted on the Parliament. That is the first point.

The second point, as the Premier highlighted clearly, is that there is no conspiracy here. We want—that is, I think, all of us here—the opportunity to debate whether we should establish a committee to inquire into an issue that raises a range of views by many people in our community. The important thing is that it is done in a respectful way to allow us to have a debate. I have heard a number of comments from across the chamber about the member for Morley and whether this is a government bill; and, if so, whether that is why it is being debated in government time. There has also been discussion about consultations and comments. I remind members that the motion before us is to suspend standing orders to allow us to debate the setting up of a select committee. That select committee will have representation from the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. In my view, we in Western Australia are in a new unique position to now look at this issue. We know that in other states of Australia the issue has been debated through a process similar to—in fact, almost exactly the same as the one that we are seeking to put forward to both chambers of Parliament. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked why we are not packing it off to a committee. That is actually what we are doing; that is what the motion says. It is the intention

Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

of the Parliament of Western Australia to establish a select committee that will inquire under the proposed terms of reference. There may be some discussion about the terms of reference, but that is exactly what we are doing.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, no.

In terms of packing it off to a committee, it is exactly what the motion reads, and we are doing exactly what the opposition is asking us to do. We are sending it to a committee. It is different from introducing legislation to this place up front. That is what happened when Hon Robin Chapple introduced legislation into the other place that never got here for debate. This chamber never had the opportunity to debate this very important issue, as highlighted by the member for Cottesloe and others. As a private member, not just a minister, I believe I should have that opportunity. That is what we are doing. We are proposing what the opposition wants to see achieved.

The other thing is that there was comment earlier about this somehow setting a precedent; that somehow only this government was introducing legislation or introducing a debate in government time from a private member. As the Premier highlighted very clearly, it already happened under the Barnett Liberal–National government. The former member for Roe, Graham Jacobs, had, again a very important bill that he championed called the Limitation Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse Actions) Bill 2015. He championed that bill because he was passionate about it. He negotiated with, I assume, the former Premier to ensure that that bill was debated during government time as a private member.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, just listen to me for one second.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, but —

Mr C.J. Barnett: We approved Graham Jacobs to introduce his bill. He was given 15 minutes to do a second reading speech only, no debate on it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: So it happened!

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, he just read it in. He —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Did the former government's cabinet discuss that? Did the former government's cabinet discuss that?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, we allowed him time only to do his second reading speech. Only his second reading speech.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What the member for Moore? The same —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Same thing: second reading speech only.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill 2014. And what have we done? We are putting forward a motion to establish a select committee. It is not legislation. It is not.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: It is. You're debating and voting on it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is not legislation, it is a motion, and I am sure we will have a debate about this.

Can we just be very clear: the member for Morley has every right to raise this. In fact, members who were here when she made her inaugural speech in this place in May will remember that she raised the issue. Because like many people in this place, and many, many people outside of this place, it is an issue that she feels passionately about. So she went to the caucus, as is the appropriate process for the Labor Party—I am sure the Liberal Party has a similar process—and that is where the decision was made to allow her to put forward a private member's motion; the caucus agreed to let her do it. Yes, we know that it is a sensitive issue in this community, but for goodness sake I think we have waited a long time for this opportunity. I think our community expects us to have this debate. That is why we are, in the words of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, packing it off to a select committee—a committee established by the Parliament with representation from the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council—to then conduct an inquiry under the terms of reference and report its findings to both chambers.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is what we are doing and that is what it is. I hope the opposition understands that to be the intent.

Question put and passed.

Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.25 pm]: I seek leave to move my motion in amended form.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Member for Morley, if you could please briefly explain what you will add.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Members, as discussed with both opposition parties, I will be adding membership to the committee through this amendment.

Leave granted.

Motion

Ms A. SANDERSON: I move —

- (1) That a joint select committee of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council on end-of-life choices be established.
- (2) That the committee inquire into and report on the need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end-of-life choices. In particular, the committee should —
 - (a) assess the practices currently being utilised within the medical community to assist a person to exercise their preferences for the way they want to manage their end of life, including the role of palliative care;
 - (b) review the current framework of legislation, proposed legislation and other relevant reports and materials in other Australian states and territories, and overseas jurisdictions; and
 - (c) consider what type of legislative change may be required, including an examination of any federal laws that may impact such legislation.
- (3) That the joint select committee consist of eight members, of whom —
 - (a) four will be members of the Assembly; and
 - (b) four will be members of the Council.
- (4) The standing orders of the Legislative Assembly relating to standing and select committees will be followed as far as they can be applied.
- (5) That the joint select committee report to both houses by 30 June 2018.
- (6) That the Legislative Council be requested to agree to a similar resolution.
- (7) That, subject to the Legislative Council agreeing to the above paragraphs, the following Legislative Assembly members be appointed —
 - (a) the member for Baldivis;
 - (b) the member for Morley;
 - (c) the member for Mount Lawley; and
 - (d) the member for South Perth.

I move this motion today to present the community and Parliament with a path forward on this very important issue. The issue of voluntary assisted dying is both difficult to deal with and deeply felt on both sides. Despite evidence of strong support in the community for legislation on voluntary assisted dying, there has been a deep reluctance of governments and Parliaments to tackle this issue that arises again and again. The community is demanding that we deal with this issue. The motion that I moved today proposes the establishment of a cross-party joint select committee that will look into not only the issue of voluntary assisted dying but also the role of palliative care.

My experience in the other place and my relatively short experience on committees have given me an understanding and appreciation of the value of the committee process, which is essentially the major gateway for the Parliament and the public to interact and for the public to give their views on important issues and for the Parliament to then consider them. That is why I have taken the approach of moving a motion to establish a joint select committee and not limited it to a standing committee of either house.

I understand from discussions behind the Chair that the opposition will be participating in the committee. I have taken a no-surprises approach to this issue because it is important. I have had discussions with the leaders of other

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 9 August 2017]

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Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

parties in this place over the last six to eight weeks. The tactics demonstrated by the opposition today have come as a big surprise and I am disappointed. I genuinely hope that we can move forward in this debate in an open, honest and respectful manner.

Many in our community have been calling for a number of years for the WA Parliament to debate this issue. The loudest call to action recently came from Dr Clive Deverall, who ended his life on election day earlier this year. I want to acknowledge Clive's wife, Noreen Fynn, in the Speaker's gallery today. Clive was a highly respected veteran of Western Australia's healthcare sector. He was head of the Cancer Council Western Australia for more than 20 years, he established Palliative Care Western Australia and worked in cancer and health consumer advocacy roles for many years.

Clive was first diagnosed with cancer in 1994. Over more than 20 years, he had a number of cancer diagnoses and managed secondary health conditions as a result of these. A believer in and practitioner of palliative care, he truly understood the good that palliative care can do. Sadly, he was also a living example of its limitations. Noreen describes Clive's last months as a living hell, with uncontrollable neuropathic pain. Despite efforts to maintain his fitness and health, an adverse reaction to medication also left him with permanent lung damage, insomnia, crippling headaches and cramps and suffering from severe medication side effects. Clive ended his life on election day in a lonely and brutal way. It was a message to us. In the note he left, he said, "Suicide is legal; euthanasia is not." Clive, like many others before him who have taken similar drastic actions, wanted a choice. Committing suicide becomes a lonely but also public matter for something that could be a private and intimate event with the support of loved ones.

I did not know Clive, but I do not think that we, as parliamentarians, can ignore his message. Whether or not individuals support the substantive issue, we owe it to the community to, at the very least, explore the options to manage our end-of-life care. Our population is increasing and advances in medicine and technology mean that many more of us are living longer. Despite this, we are seeing increases in chronic and terminal illnesses.

There have been nearly 30 attempts to legislate for voluntary assisted dying in Australia since the Northern Territory passed its laws in 1994. In Tasmania in 2009 and 2013, private members' bills were defeated. More recently, in May the Tasmania Parliament debated the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. In New South Wales, there have been multiple attempts by members to legislate, with the first in 2001 and then six further attempts. Current proposed legislation before that Parliament has been steered by a cross-party working group, which is currently taking submissions on a draft bill. South Australia has a long history of activism and legislative attempts, with 15 private members' bills since 1995. Most recently, a vote in November 2016 was defeated by a single vote when the Speaker of the house, Michael Atkinson, cast his vote with the noes. As most of us know, the Northern Territory legislated for voluntary euthanasia as far back as 1995, but it was ultimately overruled by federal legislation. As a result, territories are no longer to legislate on this matter. In Victoria, previous attempts at introducing private members' bills have also been unsuccessful. In 2015, the Legislative Council referred an inquiry to the Legal and Social Issues Committee. The Victorian government supported 44 of the 49 recommendations and identified a number that required further work. As such, it set up a ministerial advisory panel, which delivered its interim report in May this year. It also established End of Life Care Victoria as an entity. This approach has been by far the most considered and open process we have seen to date on this issue.

In Western Australia, six private members' bills have been defeated in Parliament, with the first in 1997 and the most recent in 2010. Currently in Western Australia, the Guardianship and Administration Act provides some clarification on whether a doctor can be held criminally liable for providing pain relief that hastens death. The act provides for advance health directives, as well as enduring powers of guardianship. These have been an important step in determining end-of-life care. However, the current legal framework in WA exposes healthcare professionals, families and carers to prosecution. Strong anecdotal evidence suggests that the practice of assisted dying for terminally ill patients is occurring in an unregulated environment. Late last year, an ABC Vote Compass found that there was 75 per cent support for voluntary assisted dying laws across the country. Interestingly, there was no pattern in age, gender, city, region or education level. Recent Newspoll results have support as high as 82 per cent. Despite this support and numerous failed attempts, politicians and Parliaments have been deeply reluctant to examine this issue further. In fact, if this motion is successful, it will be the first full examination in Western Australia of its kind. There are lots of reasons for this. It is a hard issue and a personal issue. For many people it is an issue about faith and ethical dilemmas, for grief and loss. But one of the main reasons is that it is divisive within the major political parties and therefore is seen as somewhere we just do not go. With this motion today, I propose we put that aside and we go there. We owe it to those medical practitioners, those suffering terminal illness—and those who will in the future—and their families to look closely at this issue and provide direction to Parliament and the community. History demonstrates that private members' bills lobbed into the Parliament without broad consultation are often deeply flawed and fail. I believe we owe the community and those

Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

who are suffering chronic and terminal illness the opportunity to contribute and engage in a process that will explore a range of views. With the very specific purpose of investigating end-of-life choices, this cross-party joint select committee will provide the greatest opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to the inquiry. Although the committee will be cross-party by nature, it is also important that it be reflective of the composition of Parliament. An eight-member committee is a large committee and it is on this basis that the motion proposes three government members and one non-government member from the Assembly. The other place will make its own determination on composition, and the intention is to put forward one government member in the other place to accommodate a broader range of parties there.

We have seen cross-party select committees achieve great outcomes—most recently in the previous Parliament, with the recognition of Aboriginals in our Constitution. It was a genuine, functional and cooperative working group across the parties that had a fantastic outcome in the end. I genuinely hope for that in this process. Although views diverge on this issue, there are principles that we all share: respect for the rights and freedoms that our society provides us and the ability for us to hold fundamentally different views, and compassion for those who are nearing the end of their lives, particularly for those who have a medical condition that will shorten their lives and inflict significant suffering. It is with these principles of respect and compassion that I move this motion and seek the support of Parliament to establish this joint select committee.

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [1.37 pm]: I rise to make a few remarks as I have been nominated by my party to be a member of the Joint Select Committee on End-of-Life Choices. Clive Deverall's wife spoke to me last week; he was a constituent of mine. It was a very sad occasion on polling day when Clive took his life after a long battle with cancer. He wanted to send a message to the community that he felt was not getting through. I have agreed to be on this committee. I do not have any preconceived ideas one way or the other. I know the debate that has been out there. I have been on committees a number of times since I have been in this place, about 12 years, so I know a little about the committee process. My idea of the committee process is that a group of members of Parliament get together and work together to flesh out a situation or a problem and try to come up with an outcome or a solution that can be brought back to Parliament. That is the way that I will be approaching my contribution to this committee. I must admit that I have been a little concerned about the composition of the committee. To have just two Liberal members on the committee defeats what committee work is really all about, especially with something like this. At the end of the day, any decision on euthanasia will be made by all members of this Parliament, both in this chamber and in the upper house. It will not be decided on party lines; it will be decided by a conscience vote, as has been mentioned, on both sides. The government members will have a conscience vote, as will members of the opposition. For that reason, I am a little concerned that there is not a broad enough cross-section of the membership. There are four members from this chamber on the committee—three from the government and one from the opposition. I know the membership from the Legislative Council is yet to be decided and voted on, but the indication is that there will be one Labor member, one Liberal member and another two spots. I would be very surprised if this committee went forward without Hon Robin Chapple being a member, considering the work he has done in the past, so I would say that the third member will be a Greens member. I am led to believe that the Nationals want to be involved in this debate, but there is only one spot left. What about the One Nation members? What about the member from the Liberal Democrats? I know this is difficult because we do not really want a committee of 10 or 12 people—the smaller the committee the better—but it needs to be looked at in this situation. In Victoria I believe the matter was raised by a crossbencher, and the upper house of the Victorian Parliament agreed for it to go to an existing standing committee on which there were three government members, three Liberal members, I think, a Greens member and a member from the Australian Sex Party, who I think put the motion forward. That was a standing committee and that is the way the matter was referred. The WA government has decided not to refer this matter to a standing committee and it has stated the reasons for that today. The matter could probably well have been referred to a standing committee and the member for Morley could have been co-opted to it. But this is the process that has been put in place and the opposition is saying that it supports debate on this issue.

I do not want to debate the pros and cons of euthanasia; today is not the day to do it. We are putting in place a process by which a committee will be formed and, hopefully, as a result of its work, it will come up with a recommendation that will lead to a better path forward on an issue that is of great concern throughout the community wherever we go as members. I am sure that any members of this place who speak to their constituents will find that there is support for euthanasia just as there is opposition from the right-to-life people. It is a very, very difficult subject. I think this is the most difficult subject that will be before this Parliament since before my days when the abortion debate was held. That was a very, very difficult debate. I supported the result of that debate, but I am told it was a very difficult time in this chamber because people from the same party came at it from very opposite sides and it caused divisions in the party. I think it is good that we are at least going forward on this issue. To be on this committee is not an easy decision to make. This is going to be a tough committee to serve on, because

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the views out there held by both sides of the debate are very strong. Among our constituents there will not be a 90 per cent to 10 per cent or 80 per cent to 20 per cent divide as we see in the polls; there will be a lot of different views. People have spoken to me, including Clive Deverall's wife. I told her I wanted her to give evidence before that committee. A lot of people will give evidence before this committee. In closing, that is the point I wanted to make. I see the numbers. I do not want to be seen as a committee member who rubberstamps something. I do not think that is what this is all about; it has to be about independent minds looking at the evidence and coming up with a well thought out recommendation to the Parliament.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.45 pm]: I would like to speak in support of the motion to establish a joint select committee on end-of-life choices. I acknowledge from the start that this is a difficult and emotional issue, as evidenced by the debate in this place today. I would like to acknowledge Noreen, the widow of Clive Deverall. As a journalist of many years, I got the opportunity to speak to Clive on many occasions and interview him. He was a constant advocate for health and the fight against cancer. I welcome Noreen's presence here today.

It is important to respect both sides of the argument. People often hold strong religious or moral convictions, and so they should because the preservation of life is a core moral belief for all of us, I think. Many countries have tried and failed to bring legislation to this area. It is quite fraught. It is about trying to legislate to offer the option of an early death with safeguards to protect the patient from undue influence, coercion or pressure, either psychological, imagined or real.

Although I do not propose to go into precise proposals for Western Australia—that would be a matter for the committee to hear evidence from the community of Western Australia—I think it is worth giving a brief background to the issue on the experience that has occurred around Australia and overseas. A number of bills—all unsuccessful—have been introduced in Parliaments in this country. My research shows that there have been 50. I notice that the member for Morley said it was 30. In any case, there have been a large number of attempts to legislate in this area. The latest attempt in South Australia recently fell short by a single vote, and that was the casting vote of the Speaker. New Zealand and the United Kingdom are looking to reform. Canada only recently introduced its own law. The United States is a very interesting case to look at where there has been legislation. As we know, strong religious conservatism exists in that country. There is often a strong lobby against the issue that dominates public policy in that area. However, the state of Oregon has had assisted dying laws for 20 years. Oregon was joined by Washington State, Montana and Vermont—all small liberal progressive states, and usually controlled by the Democratic Party—which are states in the Pacific Northwest or New England. In June last year California became the latest US state to legislate in this area. It now means that one in six, or 52 million, Americans have access to assisted dying.

All these laws follow the same basic guidelines: one must be 18 years of age; one must be mentally competent to decide; one must have an incurable terminal condition, with intolerable suffering with no access to relief; and one must be in an advanced state of decline and close to death, which is often defined as having six months to live. The process must be oversighted by two doctors with appropriate experience or training. There must be two witnesses to the process, with no right or benefit to the patient or state. The process must be initiated by the patient and the patient must agree to the process multiple times. The process must occur over a period of at least 15 days. In California, which has probably the most careful and stringent guidelines, it also requires the final, signed agreement by the patient at no more than 48 hours before the death. Finally, the lethal dose must be self-administered by the patient.

These provisions are very similar to the assisted dying law currently being considered in Victoria, which is the result of an inquiry that had 1 000 public submissions, 17 public hearings and 154 witnesses, and which concluded by recommending that the government of Victoria should approve in certain circumstances legalised assisted dying. That bill is currently being prepared in Victoria.

If we go back to the United States, what has been the experience after 20 years in Oregon? It is quite interesting to look at that. In that 20-year period, 1 327 prescriptions have been written for fatal dosage medications and 859 patients have actually ingested that medication and died. That is 859 patients over 20 years, and it averages at about 43 patients a year—that is, 43 patients out of Oregon's population of just over 4 million people. The average patient in Oregon after 20 years is represented by the following: 97 per cent of the patients were white; 90 per cent of patients were enrolled in a hospice at the time the prescription was written and at the time of death; about 80 per cent were suffering from an aggressive cancer; 70 per cent were aged 65 and above; the median age was 71; a slight majority were male; and about half had a university education. In short, according to the literature on the Oregon experience, aid in dying was found to be safe, legal and rare, and accounted for less than half of one per cent of deaths. There were fears that uneducated minorities or those without health insurance would be more likely patients, but that has not turned out to be the case. The typical patient is white, has health insurance

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and is well educated. In fact, 35 per cent of patients in Oregon who were granted a lethal prescription actually died before they were able to take the dosage. The prescription appeared to give them comfort that they had an option that would relieve them of the stress of worrying about possible greater suffering.

I would like to go to the definition of “assisted dying” compared with “voluntary euthanasia”. It is taken to be, from the literature and research that I have seen, that voluntary euthanasia is when a doctor administers the lethal dosage, and assisted dying is when the patient takes the medication themselves.

Finally, I would like to offer a personal perspective on what is a very difficult and contentious matter. Having the right to choose the time of your death must surely be the ultimate expression of liberty and freedom of the individual. Those are values I hold dear and they are values that I hear defended around this chamber. Surely, only someone in the position of wanting this choice could really have insight into the issue. None of us wants to be in this position or to see our loved ones in this position, but we know that many Western Australians almost daily face the intolerable suffering of a terminal and aggressive condition that will eventually claim their lives. Having the right to choose the time of death or not in those circumstances is something that in the final analysis must be the sole right of the individual.

It may be that in Western Australia there is strong opposition to any move towards assisted dying. I can tell members, as a prospective member of this committee, that I will keep an open mind to all the evidence that comes before me. I do not think anyone can actually go into a committee on this issue without having a preconception or a view, but it is very important that one keeps an open mind, as far as possible, to hear all the evidence and all the views.

This is a conversation that the state needs to have. On a personal level, in my home there is an alternative view, held quite strongly by my wife, so I know it will be a debate that I will conduct both in this place and at home. I am sure there will be other people in this chamber who will have the same conversations on either side of the debate, both here and amongst their family and friends. As I said before, this is a debate in the community and around the world, and it is a conversation that we, as parliamentarians, owe it to the state to have.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the National Party) [1.55 pm]: I rise today on behalf of the National Party to support this motion and I thank the member for Morley for the discussions that she held with the Nationals on this very important matter. As members have already reflected upon, this is an issue that can be incredibly divisive within the community, and there are strong opinions held on all sides of the debate because it is very personal to everyone in the community. It is something that at some point, I have no doubt, everyone needs to come to terms with.

As a member of the other place, I have already participated in one such debate, so I am one of the members who have been through this already, albeit through a specific piece of legislation. I was a relatively new member at the time, so it was a baptism of fire, given some of the very emotive debates that came to our Parliament. On that occasion the bill was not successful because, at the end of the day, it probably did not reflect the desires of the community at that point in time. In our view, it did not deliver on the intent of those proposing it. Nonetheless, many views were canvassed, with great respect, in that place during the debate, and it certainly initiated a lot of conversations in the community. As we go through this process, members will no doubt have discussions with their constituents about this issue; it is an issue that certainly brings people forward in the electorates.

I agree that, as parliamentarians, we cannot shy away from legislating on some of these very difficult issues. We, as the National Party, have requested that there is representation from the National Party, and there has been agreement that there will be a representative in the other place to ensure that our views, as a party, and the views of the people who we represent, are included. We thank the member and the other people we have been dealing with for the opportunity to ensure that we have a representative in the other place.

It is important that we get this right. The committee process allows a proper process of engagement. When this matter comes back to Parliament, I say to members that the Nationals have a policy of making sure that each of our members will have the opportunity of a conscience vote, or a vote in the best interests of their electorates, on every matter that comes before this house. Whatever is brought back from the committee will certainly be a guiding document and a guiding recommendation, but at the end of the day, each National Party member will be able to vote on whatever is brought forward according to their conscience or the best interests of their electorates.

Thank you very much for the discussions we had leading into this debate; we appreciate the consideration of being able to have a representative from the party on the committee.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Have you got any more praise you can lavish on us?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: No more praise, member!

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 9 August 2017]

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Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr John McGrath; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Mia Davies

I can reflect on the fact that we had the previous debate in the other place in 2010. This is how heartfelt it is in the community: people are still pulling my debate out of *Hansard* to send to me to remind me of what I said during that debate, according to what their views were. Whatever is said in this place, however it is debated, everyone is watching because it is one of those things that everyone understands and has a very personal view on. For those members who are about to participate in this, be very conscious—I am sure they are—that there will be a very heightened level of understanding and passion in the community about what we are about to undertake. That puts some pressure on those sitting on the committee.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2563.]