



Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

3 November 2017

To Whom It May Concern

Response to End of Life Choices inquiry

AHCWA welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices.

We are the peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) and Aboriginal health in Western Australia, with 22 ACCHSs across our state currently engaged as members. Our approach to service provision is based on the philosophy of empowering Aboriginal people in 'owning' and 'driving' the health and other community services that are provided to Aboriginal people in the communities in which they live.

In relation to the above inquiry, AHCWA at this point-in-time generally supports the need for citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices. However, substantial care must be undertaken in the development of legislation that is relevant to achieving this. In particular, there are safeguards and protections that must be considered with regards to: people who experience disadvantage; how family will be involved in such decisions; and, how a model can be culturally appropriate and safe. As such, we recommend the following to the Joint Select Committee:

1. That Aboriginal people and their communities are significantly involved in the design of any potential legislation and the review of current legislation that impacts upon their end of life choices.
2. That a comprehensive education and information campaign is undertaken by the State Government to ensure that Aboriginal people and their communities understand the significance and potential impact of any potential legislation.
3. That if an End of Life Choices Bill was to be developed, then as a priority, the State Government ensure that funding is made available to guarantee that those Aboriginal people who pass away off Country, are returned to Country at the earliest opportunity.

AHCWA and our Member Services are willing to assist the State Government in considering and implementing the above. If you require any further information, please contact our office on (08) 92271631.

Yours faithfully,

Des Martin
Chief Executive Officer