

10/10/17

Attention: Principal Research Officer
Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Ms Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA
Chair of Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Dear Ms Sanderson

I am writing in support of any laws that will allow voluntary euthanasia or assisted dying in WA. I have personal experience of two very dear and special friends dying in cruel circumstances that could have been so very different if their wish to die to relieve their suffering had been respected.

Both my friends were admitted to retirement homes, one when she had problems falling in her house and needed constant bed care and another when he had cancer and a degree of memory loss that meant he would walk outside his home and sometimes could not remember where he was. Both of them became severely depressed in the homes they entered, which they experienced as a form of imprisonment after having led blameless lives. My female friend simply turned her head to the wall and refused communication, food, and drink. She died of starvation and lack of liquid intake in two weeks. My male friend told the nurses in the retirement home that he no longer wished to eat or drink. His family were advised. He then starved himself to death and, of course, suffered intensely but said nothing. It was tragic sitting with him and being able to do nothing to help.

Both these beautiful people had led long and blameless lives. If they could have been given the right to determine how and when they died they would have been able to die with family and friends around them and without the agony they suffered. I want the right to determine how and when my life is to end if I am terminally ill, suffering unbearably without the prospect of improvement, or if I have to depend on others for even the most basic care. Suitable palliative care should be available to all who want it. However, I should be able to get medical help for a peaceful death, as long as I am competent and have been informed of alternatives. A good death should be my right.

Thank you for considering my submission. I would certainly be available for a personal appearance before your Committee if I could be of any assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Marilyn V. Rainier