

Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices,

As a member of Western Australia I would like to voice my concerns regarding the recent government Inquiry into the need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed choices regarding their own end of life choices.

I understand the government would like to legalise euthanasia in Western Australia, and do so in the context of the way such legalisation has been made in other Australian States and countries. I was sorely disappointed upon hearing this and think it is a very dangerous position to adopt. It will lead to countless other debates (which cannot be good for unity in our state) as other ethical predicaments arise. If the law allows an elderly person to end their life on the grounds of a chronic illness, what of young people who are diagnosed with a terminal illness? How can they justly prevent them from ending their life? And what of people who suffer from mental illnesses or depression who don't see their life as worth anything – must they be given the right to end their life as well? Does not this send the message to these people that they are no longer wanted in our society, and that we'd rather they ended their life rather than having to care for them when they are not sufficiently able to care for themselves? At its core, is this not promoting suicide? We cannot simultaneously promote euthanasia, and claim to provide protection for the vulnerable, depressed and poor. Surely, changing legislation to end of life choices will create many contentious issues that will tear apart a unified society and significantly undermine the sanctity of human life.

Furthermore, legalising euthanasia puts pressure on the elderly in our society, and can cause them to feel as if they are a burden to society. Many elderly people receive tax payer's money in their pensions and through the health care systems. It is unsurprising then, that they may feel as if they are burdensome and cumbersome to the rest of society, and as if they are holding them back from using that money to improve the environment. This occurs despite the fact that they have the right to receive pensions, having themselves paid taxes when they were younger. Legalising euthanasia increases the feeling of being a burden to society, and thus puts pressure on the elderly to end their lives much earlier than necessary – not for themselves, but because they don't want to be in the way of anyone else. This was confirmed to me when I had a conversation with a very elderly man in the shop several weeks ago. Enforcing such an obligation on our elderly generation is innately selfish, and unhelpful at best.

As a Christian, I cannot support this recent inquiry. I urge you to reconsider making such huge changes to our society, as the implications will be far from beneficial for all involved. Human life is precious and ought to be protected at all costs.

Kind regards,

Sarah den Boer