

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: My story (actually my mother's story)

From: Susan Maccora

Sent: Thursday, 19 October 2017 10:01 AM

To: Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices <eolcc@parliament.wa.gov.au>

Subject: My story (actually my mother's story)

To who it may concern I wish to add my voice to the many people who are/have suffered because we do not have Dying with Dignity available in Western Australia.

My mother had Alzheimers Disease. She died at age 95 – a horrible death brought about in the end by having falls and breaking numerous bones. After her first fall, she had surgery and the anaesthetics caused her condition to deteriorate. After the second fall where she broke multiple bones – it was decided not to operate. So she returned to the Aged Care facility where she suffered unbearable pain and agony until finally enough drugs were administered that her body shut down, she stopped swallowing and she died. Only people who have had to witness this can understand how important their vote is!

The day I told my mother that she needed to go into care, she asked me “but can’t I just have a little drink and go to sleep”, to which I replied, “sorry, that’s not allowed” – she then said “well then, just get a gun and shoot me” – to which I replied – “sorry, I’ve told you before, I’d go to jail for that”. You see, we had discussed end of life issues many times. My mother wanted the right to decide when she had had enough. Instead she went into care where she was disoriented, displaced, and made to suffer all sorts of indignities (just from having to be there, not from the staff).

I believe that if my mother had known (even in her demented state) that she had the choice to decide when she had had enough – that she would have had way more peace at her end of life. Instead, she lived daily, not only with the confusion of dementia – but with the powerlessness of not knowing how much more she would have to suffer. I don’t believe that she would have chosen “the drink” as requested on the day she went into care – I believe that she would have gone (albeit begrudgingly) into care with the knowledge that when it became too much – IT WAS RECORDED what her wishes were. I am aware that this legislation probably doesn’t cover pre-requested end of life in the case of dementia – but it would be my wish that that also be on the agenda – because as we baby boomers age, need that too.

Please consider each and every story before voting – this is such an important vote that you have which is going to affect more and more people in the very near future.

Sincerely
Susan Maccora