

Submission to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Mr Terrence E Hann

In my opinion, the current Western Australian laws are adequate for our citizens to make well informed decisions about their end of life management. I do not support a change in our laws to provide for voluntary euthanasia or “physician assisted dying”, even when a patient is in constant unbearable pain.

Considering Term of Reference One, I understand that there are current medical laws in place for doctors to relieve the pain and suffering of those close to death even when the use of drugs will have the effect of shortening the life of a sick person. I contend that this principle of double effect is poorly understood, and erroneously attributed to euthanasia. I ask the Committee recommends clarity through education on this issue.

Considering Term of Reference Two with regard to developments in Victoria, my concern for our society under this proposed legislation is that such changes will introduce the possibility of extending the option of ending one’s own life to a whole spectrum of scenarios that will have to be considered for the sick, the frail aged, the disabled, the chronically and/or mentally ill to name a few – all of whom at some time may seek to end their long term suffering. At worst, this change in our laws places decisions about termination of life in the hands of guardians/family members if a sick person has been declared mentally incompetent to manage their own affairs.

I ask the Joint committee to review carefully the laws that are in place and to recommend legislation that strengthens the role of medical professionals who deal constantly with those who are facing death but to reject any legislation that allows for voluntary- patient decision- termination of life or physician assisted dying.

T E Hann

19th October 2017