

SUBMISSION to the Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Inquiring into the need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed choices regarding their own end of life choices

Submitted by: Dr Nathan Francis, private citizen and medical practitioner



(Personal details and address are not for publication)

I am making a written submission and not able to attend to present my case

General Position:

- 1 I believe the current laws on Advance Health of Directives and Enduring Power of Guardianship make sufficient provision for citizens to make informed consent about their end of life choices
- 2 I do not support changing the state laws to provide voluntary euthanasia or physical assisted dying

Reasoning:

It not possible for an independent person, whether medical or judicial to perceive the simple satisfaction of seeing e.g. the light of the day, the smile or voice of a relative or the smell of a flower or scent

I am unaware of any studies that can estimate the feelings of a patient with dementia or Alzheimer's or stroke or a child with a deformity like Hydrocephalus or Cerebral Palsy.

The family of a debilitated child will be under severe additional strain to make a decision about terminating a life of their loved ones with conflicting views from friends and family.

Changes in the law will allow family members to end a life for personal or financial reasons. No matter the safeguards in the legislation, they will be conflicting opinions, which will be tested in court compounding further stress to the bereavement process.

The medical profession will be under duress to comply with the changes. Even it the legislation allows a doctor to withdraw from the decision, it will be very difficult for a long term family doctor to abstain from the decision further aggravating the decision process for the family.

If a panel is established to make a decision in difficult cases, it will be an unduly long, expensive and impersonal decision making process.

Signed

Date

20/10/17