

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission: End of Life Choices Inquiry

From: Warnar Spyker

Sent: Monday, 23 October 2017 10:28 PM

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

Subject: Submission: End of Life Choices Inquiry

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

This is not the first time that I have taken the opportunity to respond to an inquiry regarding end of life choices. I recall that a number of years ago there was a proposed Bill within the Legislative Council seeking to legalise euthanasia, which thankfully was defeated by a significant majority. I say thankfully, for the strength of a society lies in the way that it cares for its weakest and most vulnerable members. The terminally ill are amongst those weakest members, and the legalization of euthanasia transmits a strong message that they have passed their "use by date", are no longer serving any useful purpose, and should therefore not continue to live.

It is precisely at this time that the terminally ill require our full support and care. They need to be loved and supported, and indeed it is during these last months, weeks or days that we may not only care for them but also learn from them, and see how God carries them. It is our God who knows all the days of our life, and He is both the giver and taker of life. It is for us to simply place our lives in His hand, and live in the peaceful knowledge that He will carry us to the end.

I had the personal experience of living closely with death of a loved one by terminal illness. My first wife, Eloise, passed away from cancer in 2005 at the age of 32 years. It was a difficult time because at the time we had 2 young sons aged 2 and 4. Death is a difficult enemy to face, yet it was such a privilege to witness that she could do so in the knowledge that both in life and in death, we belong to our Saviour Jesus Christ. Nothing can separate us from His love. And so she (and we) could approach her regressing illness with confidence. Yet it was also a time that needed the support of those of around her, including family and loved ones. Any idea that her life was a burden to us, or no longer useful (being ideas that euthanasia promote) would not give the much needed support but would rather be devastating.

The medical care that she received was superb, including pain relieving medication during that later part of her illness. Given all these treatment options, there never was a time that she could have suffered "unbearable pain" such as some use to justify euthanasia.

I was born in Holland and migrated to Australia at the age of 5. When I hear what has occurred following the legalization of euthanasia in Holland only a short 15 years ago, I am horrified. It has swiftly moved from euthanasia in (purportedly) very narrow circumstances, to what has seemingly become euthanasia on demand. It is no longer limited to terminal illness, and can be administered at all ages and even to those with mental health issues. But that is not a surprise, for when life becomes conditional upon various criteria, those criteria can be changed at the will and whim of legislators (or doctors). No safeguards will be able to prevent that expansion and accessibility of euthanasia once the concept becomes one that is accepted and enshrined in law.

I request that you do everything within your power to ensure that euthanasia is not legalized. Rather, please support the vulnerable and those who are terminally ill in every way possible, that they receive the medical care required but even more importantly to recognize that they belong, have a task within life, and remain an integral part of their wider community and society, under the blessing of God.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission.

Wishing you every blessing in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

Warnar Spyker