

20 October 2017

The Principal Research Officer  
Select Committee on End of Life Choices  
Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Committee Members

I write to convey my strong support for the right of the individual to choose when their life should be ended when facing insufferable ongoing physical and/or emotional pain and the prospect of a minimal quality of life, and for a legislated framework that supports those doctors and family members who assist an individual to follow through on such a decision.

I believe that a consistently held and expressed view by the individual that they would want their life ended in such circumstances (before they have arisen) should, if the individual is no longer able and doesn't have the prospect to communicate their views, be grounds for their life to be ended.

I want the legislation to provide a minimal number of protections to ensure that the person has not been coerced and was capable of making such a decision at the time of expressing their wishes.

I would want the Government and the Parliament to ensure on an ongoing basis that palliative care is available and well-resourced so that people can pursue this pathway for as long as they wish.

I don't believe that the current provisions for an Enduring Powers of Guardianship and Attorney, and Advanced Health Directives go any way to meeting the rights of an individual in situations such as chronic and/or terminal illnesses. This primarily relates to it being an offence to assist anyone to end their life rather than it being a right to choose to provide such assistance in the circumstances I have identified.

I would want to be able to be assisted or to have my life ended and to be able to assist a family member if it was their wish in the circumstances I have identified.

This has been my long-held view. I have been a member of the organisation Dying with Dignity Western Australia for over 20 years, however the views expressed here are my personal views. They are in part shaped by the experience following my mother suffering a serious spinal injury in an accident and a thorough medical assessment establishing that while she could be kept alive with ventilator support she would have a minimal quality of life.

Kind regards

Peter Wilkins