

## SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES

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

### SUBMITTED BY

Mary Nenke - private citizen, mother, grandmother and business woman

### Background:

My mother was palliative for several months before her death. During that time she was able to stay at home because she was visited daily by Silver Chain nurses. For the last month of her life I moved into her home and assisted in her care. Silver Chain did all the showering and changing which allowed my mother to maintain her dignity and gave me the time to simply show my love for her which she so appreciated.

Her doctor visited regularly as required increasing pain relief as needed and did not allow her to suffer. In her final days we were assured by her doctor that he would not allow her to suffer and would and did increase the pain relief necessary to allow her to die with dignity while I held her hand. The doctor on the evening prior to her death told us that she would not survive the night and we as a family were able to say our goodbyes.

Due to superb palliative care my mother was able to maintain her dignity and comfort. She was never made to feel that she was a burden. We as a family were confident that the doctor would keep her relatively pain free and were very happy with his management plan

### GENERAL POSITION AND REASONS

- I believe that current Western Australian laws on Advance Health Directives and Enduring Power of Guardianship provide for citizens to make informed choices about their end of life options. This is supported by my own family experience and discussions I have had with both doctors and nurses.
  - Promoters of euthanasia and PAD over simplify the complex problem of end of life suffering. There are enormous risks in legislating including the pressures placed on the person dying as well as their families. Many elderly people and those suffering terminal illnesses don't want to be what they perceive as a 'burden' on their families and could feel obliged to choose euthanasia. There is also the risk of opportunistic benefactors putting undue pressure on the person dying.
- With such legislation the most vulnerable are at risk including those who are aged, disabled and the chronically and mentally ill.
- Neither euthanasia nor PAD have been legislated safely in any country in the world. There is a tendency to be on a 'slippery slide' with the most vulnerable at risk

What is needed most is for increased funding for quality palliative care to be available to all citizens both in the country and city. I definitely do not support changing State laws to provide for voluntary euthanasia or physician assisted dying.

Mary Nenke

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