

Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices - Joint Committee

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

Per: eolcc@parliament.wa.gov.au

SUBMISSION RE: Inquiry into the need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices

In relation to the broader question that the Select Committee is Committee is inquiring into; namely "whether there is a need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices"; I submit:

- That any consideration of euthanasia, assisted suicide or end of life choice (or whatever terminology may be used) is inherently morally wrong, risky for persons at various times of increased vulnerability, devalues human life and is in conflict with the calling and time-honoured ethics of medical professions to give singular attention to protecting health.
- That scarce community health resources ought to be directed to preservation of human health, including increased resources for palliative care and palliative sedation as people approach end of life, and none of it diverted to promoting or servicing euthanasia.

Accordingly, I submit that there is no need or justification for any change in law to introduce, legalise or promote euthanasia.

In relation to the specific terms of reference (a); namely to "assess the practices currently being utilised within the medical community to assist a person to exercise their preferences for the way they want to manage their end of life when experiencing chronic and/or terminal illnesses, including the role of palliative care", I submit:

- That there is need for improved training for all medical professions in palliative care and palliative sedation based on models of care which value human life and provide improved end of life care and pain management, without resorting to euthanasia.

In relation to the specific terms of reference (b); namely to "review the current framework of legislation, proposed legislation and other relevant reports and materials in other Australian States and Territories and overseas jurisdictions", I submit:

- That the Committee ought to give considerable weight to the experience in such overseas jurisdictions where the adoption of euthanasia has over the years has demonstrated that so-called protections against misuse of euthanasia have proven weak and ineffective.

In relation to the specific terms of reference (d); namely to “examine the role of Advanced Health Directives, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Power of Guardianship laws and the implications for individuals covered by these instruments in any proposed legislation”, I submit:

- That such instruments as these should never be extended in such manner as to give rise to or allowing any possibility of the occurrence of involuntary euthanasia.

I respectfully make this submission for consideration by the Committee.

Yours faithfully

Trevor S Harvey

GradDipBus., BE(Hons), MIEAust, FAICD