

Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

4 October 2017

Attention: Principal Research Officer
Ms Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA
Chair of Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Dear Ms Sanderson,

I am writing in support of any laws that will allow voluntary euthanasia or assisted dying in Western Australia.

I have personal experience of how a family member died in a state of intense and unwanted suffering. It was horrific and the suffering was completely futile & totally pointless.

My husband contracted Mesothelioma & died an agonising death. The suffering was totally unnecessary given that this particular disease is incurable and you WILL die. My husband left it too late to end his own life, which he had wanted to do, but if I'd had the means to end his life myself, I'd have done it in a heartbeat. The cruelty of prolonging anyone's life when in such agony is beyond my comprehension and is considered by the majority and certainly by me, abuse. The only end is death so why not give the person relief and dignity by having a painless peaceful death.

After years of wins in the Australian court system my husband didn't live to see his big win in the High Court of Australia against BHP Billiton which has set a precedent for all those who will come after him, who are suffering the same hideous disease.

Some people may be lucky enough to have a doctor who would show true compassion and assist a patient to die but the timing would be solely at the doctor's discretion and the doctor would technically be breaking the law which is ridiculous given that suicide is legal.

Any such assistance would also be right at the very end of life, having needlessly suffered only to have the same agonising end. Why??. Doctors will not/cannot help when a person has a chronic condition which makes life unbearable. If someone wants to end his/her life under those conditions (voluntary euthanasia or VE), then the act would have to be carried out while the individual was still able to do it of his/her own volition.

Reliable, legal and peaceful methods to end one's life are not readily available to the older generation who may want to avoid a continuing decline in health and dignity. It then becomes a matter of luck whether someone succeeds or ends up the worse for trying.

It must be an individual's personal choice to escape a painful and unbearable life without any perceived dignity. A doctor's assistance would help ensure a peaceful death but the necessary final drug should be made available to those who want to use it regardless of anyone else's feelings. This is an individual's decision and should be their legal right.

Ultimately, I want to have the right to determine how and when my life is to end. If I were terminally ill, suffering unbearably without the prospect of improvement, or if I had to depend on others for even the most basic care then I should have the legal right to access the

necessary drug to end my life at a time of my choosing. I DO NOT WANT PALLIATIVE CARE but it should be available to those who do. I should also be able to get medical help for a peaceful death, as long as I am competent. I do not want to be informed of so-called 'alternatives'. All I want is to be able to end my life when I want to, not be poked and prodded and forced to exist in the most horrific of circumstances. RELIGION SHOULD NEVER COME INTO THIS DEBATE.

Thank you for considering my submission. I am available for a personal appearance before your Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Marcelle van soest