



Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary
Schoenstatt Centre

Dr Jeannine Purdy
Principal Research Officer
Legislative Assembly Committee Office
Level 1 11 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE END OF LIFE CHOICES INQUIRY

Dear Dr Purdy,

As the Leader of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary community in Western Australia, where we have been for over 60 years, I am writing on behalf of our community. I address Term of Reference One with a brief account of one of our Sisters. Through this, we express our concern about the possibility of assisted suicide and or euthanasia becoming legalised in our state. We strongly believe in the reality that physician assisted death is both unnecessary, unsafe and devoid of the pastoral and spiritual care towards those chronically ill and dying.

On August 16 this year one of our sisters, Sr M Henriette Becker passed away after over 17 years of suffering immobility. She was lovingly cared for in a local Nursing Home. Though it was difficult to see the suffering of Sr M Henriette throughout the years and to see her slow deterioration in health, neither Sr M Henriette nor we would in any way have contemplated euthanasia or assisted suicide. For each member of our community and for those who came to visit Sr M Henriette, we were able to experience the dignity with which she accepted her suffering. She radiated joy, peace and gratitude to those around her. Her life of immobility and vulnerability had meaning. Her life of prayer and suffering became a blessing for many.

From our above experience, euthanasia and assisted suicide cannot be seen as a means of 'treatment' for chronic or terminal illness. Rather, 'if you provide the right palliative care urgently, effectively and confidently, you don't have to have the sorts of deaths that proponents of this legislation are suggesting you can't avoid (Former AMA Victoria presidents urge MPs to reject euthanasia legislation, abc.net.au, 19.09.2017)

We ask that a greater awareness of and resources for palliative care services be available so that many people can access the medical, pastoral and spiritual care they need at the end of their life, as the only truly humane and dignified response to those terminally ill and dying.

We do not wish to appear before the committee in person, however our contact details are above should you have any further queries. You will receive a hard copy of our submission through the post.

Sincerely,

Sr M Elizabeth Foley ISSM
Community Leader