

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission to Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

From: Gordon Killow

Sent: Thursday, 19 October 2017 11:53 AM

To: Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices <eolcc@parliament.wa.gov.au>

Subject: Submission to Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

To the Joint Committee,

I would like to address my submission to the fundamental concern of the inquiry. The repeated phrase, "to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices" seems unnecessarily ambiguous. If this is merely a review of current practices, I doubt there would be need for such a public response. It seems that the implication is that a new "choice" is to be given to our citizens, and that being to choose to end their life by direct intervention. At the present time, and since the beginning of civilised society, this is known as suicide, and it is never considered a societal good. I write as one who has watched a loved one die from a degenerative and fatal disease that took less than 12 months from diagnosis to death. It was a profoundly difficult time, but a deeply humanising experience for all as we cared for our loved one, experienced his moments of clarity - some on his final day, watched the amazing care of the staff in the aged care facility, and saw how people far and wide expressed love, appreciation and grief while having time to process what was happening and express their love. I say this was all a deeply humanising experience because no other creature treats their own in this way. We conferred with the specialists at the first diagnosis when the prognosis was given. We agreed to no drastic interventions to sustain 'animation' at all costs. But the consideration of *intervening to hasten* death is a profoundly de-humanising act. It is to treat a human as just any creature, like a pet to be 'put down' at the vet. The loss of dignity and the loss of any opportunity to experience the life of the person, however frail, to the end, is tragically short-sighted. I urge the Joint Select Committee to not make any recommendation that would lead to the legal approval and encouragement of changing the status quo regarding end of life choices. In Western Australia we have wonderful facilities, excellent caring professionals, and world class medical and pharmaceutical aids for those who face the end of life experiencing chronic and/or terminal illnesses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gordon Killow