

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission: End of Life Choices Inquiry

From: Andrew Vermeulen

Sent: Wednesday, 18 October 2017 8:25 PM

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

Subject: Submission: End of Life Choices Inquiry

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. Recently I lost my father-in-law, Mr Bill Van der Schaaf, who died after a long (12 year) struggle with dementia. The last 8 years of his life he was not able to speak, and in fact had lost control of his own body functions. We have to admit that at times we wondered if his life still had purpose. But we firmly believe that life is a gift. Human life is of much more value than animal life. As wonderful and beautiful as animals are they do not have the ability to reason as humans do. Humans are a creation above animals. I think we all innately know that. My father-in-law's life, even in his diseased state was still of more value than the life of an animal. In fact his life had purpose right until the day of his death five week ago. His struggle with dementia meant:

1. That his wife had to go his hostel room day by day to feed him and sit with him. That taught us and our children the commitment of love.
2. That we went to visit him with our children whenever we went up to Perth (we live in Albany). That taught our children that life can at times be hard. It taught them that people do get old. It taught them to love their grandfather even though he couldn't respond to them.
3. That his carers at Fair Haven Hostel in Armadale had to shower him, change him, care for him, etc. On numerous occasions the carers told us that he was such a sweet old man. That taught us that even people in their demented state can still show their character, and can still be loved.
4. That we can all understand other families who are going through the struggles of losing their loved ones to dementia. We can now empathise with others, and that is a blessing to them.

The pro euthanasia lobby wants to take that all away. This is short sighted and detrimental to society as a whole. It may well be that economically money will be saved, but life is not about money. Life is about relationships. And regardless of which way you look at it relationships end at death. Legalising euthanasia will result in less compassion in society.

I realise that not everyone believes in an Almighty Creator – God. However, I hope that what I have shared with you will help those who don't believe in the existence of God see that euthanasia will not be helpful to society in any circumstance. I'd plead with the government to support good palliative care facilities, so that our loved ones can die in good, caring and loving environments. It's true that death is a reality in life, but let's not hasten death. Personally, I believe that to do so is wrong and against what God wants, and at the same time it will reduce true love, care and compassion in our society.

I'd be more than happy to discuss this further. Feel free to contact me.

Best wishes on your discussions

Regards

Andrew Vermeulen