

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

23 October 2017

Dear Committee

First, apologies for this last-minute submission. I've been overseas (supporting, coincidentally, two elderly family members' end of life choices) and the deadline has arrived unnoticed. I'll keep it short.

This submission address the terms of reference below (my highlights):

*b) review **the current framework of legislation**, proposed legislation and other relevant reports and materials in other Australian states and territories and overseas jurisdictions*

*d) **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*

*Any submission which assists the Committee to address its terms of reference, including ... **the broader issue of the need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices**, would be welcome.*

An introductory 'death care choices' community meeting was held yesterday, Sunday 22 October, in Denmark which about fifty people, including me, attended.

This inquiry and its specific ToR were not part of the discussion. However I wanted to put on record the general sense of the meeting and what, for me, appeared to be overriding concerns that relate to the ToR.

I: refer ToR b: ***the current framework of legislation***

there was support for, and interest in, single permit funerals and how the process might best be simplified, encouraged and supported by all involved parties (health car eservices; funeral directors; local government etc)

II: refer to ToR d ***examine the role of advanced health directives***

there was support for, and interest in, easier access to information regarding advanced health directives. Subsequently I looked at the official AHD form online, appreciated

its simplicity and hope the information is/will be promoted to, and remain as easily accessible for, those without internet access/capability

III: refer Inquiry's general remarks *to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices*

the attendance in a small country town on a Sunday afternoon speaks to community interest in this. Issues raised in the Q&A also included

- a wish for clarity of understanding about official roles/responsibilities versus personal rights and choices
- a wish to normalise the conversation about end-of-life choices and death 'out of the closet' and into the wider community
- support for a series of workshop-type sessions to guide individuals through various processes such as formulating an AHD; ways to talk with loved ones about preparation for death; pre-preparation for funeral

Best wishes with your deliberations.

Virginia Jealous