

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: My submission to the enquiry

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From:

Sent: Saturday, 14 October 2017 5:22 PM

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

Subject: My submission to the enquiry

Dear End of Life Choices Inquiry,

Please allow me to share with you my concerns about legalising euthanasia in Western Australia.

I believe that allowing legal euthanasia would be to repudiate the government's responsibility for protecting the lives of frail and vulnerable citizens. Evidence from overseas shows that euthanasia laws are always initially billed as providing sufficient safeguards to protect against abuse, but in practice, and over time, these safeguards have always proven inadequate.

In Holland, for example, the Rummelink Report, an official Dutch government survey of euthanasia practices, found that more than one thousand patients are involuntarily euthanised each year. And in Belgium, a study published in the Canadian Medical School Journal showed almost half of all nurses admitted to killing patients without their consent.

It is naïve to think that with Western Australia's rapidly aging population and soaring health care costs euthanasia could be contained if ever it was first allowed. It is worth considering that a euthanasia kit costs only tens of dollars, whereas proper medical care of an elderly or severely disabled patient costs tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is inevitable that for purely financial motives the legal 'treatment' of death will come to be strongly favoured by families and governments over time, once the option is available.

Please do not allow this to happen in Western Australia. Do not blight the lives of frail and vulnerable citizens and diminish their options at the end of their lives. Instead, please focus the committee's attention on how genuine palliative care can be improved and made more available.

Yours sincerely,

Yee-Ling Lam