

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission to the inquiry into end of life choices

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Saturday, 14 October 2017 7:49 PM

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

Subject: Submission to the inquiry into end of life choices

Dear Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices,

We are strongly opposed to legalising euthanasia or assisted suicide, both on practical and moral grounds.

Some may be tempted to believe that legalised euthanasia would increase the choice available to those dying, but in reality it would diminish choice because of the pressure imposed on patients to end their lives by budget-conscious hospitals or even family members. We therefore hope that the committee will see fit to rule out euthanasia as being beneficial to the community at an early stage of the inquiry.

Furthermore, we encourage the committee members to consider the experience of countries where euthanasia has been legal for some time, such as the Netherlands and Belgium. There the slippery slope has extended euthanasia even to children and those with mental disabilities. And in such cases, the decision to kill is, of course, made by others.

We also wish to stress that euthanasia and assisted suicide cannot be considered as medical options. From the earliest times, medical professionals have defined themselves as healers, a calling which could not be more dissimilar to those who deliberately kill. The Hippocratic Oath makes this distinction very clear by forbidding doctors to 'give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor making a suggestion to this effect'. We therefore hope that the committee will not confuse euthanasia with the work of medicine.

For the reasons mentioned above, we urge the committee to reject euthanasia and assisted suicide and instead concentrate on improving real end-of-life choices, such as access to proper palliative care for all Western Australians.

Yours sincerely,

Murray and Zaharah Lumsden