

SUBMISSION to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Inquiring into the need for laws in Western Australia to allow citizens to make informed choices regarding their own end of life choices

Submitted by Dr Suzanne Nenke, General Practice Registrar



General Position with respect to Term of Reference One

- 1 Current Western Australian laws are currently sufficient and enable citizens to make informed decisions regarding their end of life choices
- 2 I do not support changing State laws to provide for voluntary euthanasia or physician-assisted dying (PAD).
- 3 I believe the role of palliative care needs to be reviewed and funding extended to enable citizens to have access from all hospitals and rural locations.

Reasoning

- End of life decision making is a complex and emotive area of legislation which requires the state to protect the citizens and enable dignity and care of the most vulnerable.
- Euthanasia and PAD are complex actions with substantial risks that cannot be sufficiently managed through guidelines.
- The negative risks and implications of euthanasia and PAD affect the individual, the family and the health care provider.
- In countries where euthanasia or PAD has been legislated for persons with terminal or chronic illness, the laws have always been extended beyond the initial criteria.
- The dignity of a person is not determined by their ability or usefulness. In contrast, euthanasia and PAD create a line of thought and thus action where human value is determined based on usefulness.
- Palliative care is currently not sufficiently available in all hospitals in Western Australia and does not currently have enough funding to enable appropriate care in rural locations.
- The current level of palliative care funding needs to be reassessed so that patients have equal access to end of life choices and appropriate and dignified care.

I wish to appear before the Committee to present my case.

Dr Suzanne Nenke