

## Admin, LACO

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**Subject:** FW: Submission for End of Life Choices Committee  
**Attachments:** image1.JPG; ATT00001.txt; image2.JPG; ATT00002.txt

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

From: Chris McDonald  
Sent: Monday, 23 October 2017 9:17 PM  
To: Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices <eolcc@parliament.wa.gov.au>  
Subject: Submission for End of Life Choices Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached a signed copy of my submission to the committee regarding end of life choices. I have also included the text here in the email body.

Yours faithfully,  
Christopher R. McDonald

When it comes to the broader question of end of life laws, misleading language has been used by supporters of voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide. According to Professor Margaret Somerville, an expert on this topic, pro-euthanasia campaigners can use language that assumes that euthanasia will be introduced and that the only question that requires answering is how it should be legislated. The reality is, however, that a factual and truthful debate is first required on whether it should be introduced in the first place.

Australia is in the privileged position to be able to observe the consequences of similar laws in other countries before potentially introducing anything similar in our own. We would be foolish not to take note.

There are consequences of any law change, whether they be intended or not, and whether the legislators had good intentions or not. The slippery slope warned of regarding end of life laws is real. Other countries have observed the following since introducing euthanasia laws:

1. In Belgium it is now routine to euthanise the mentally ill (such as those with depression or personality disorders) and there are now protocols for children.
2. In Oregon, almost half of those who are assisted to suicide speak of their concern of being a burden to family and friends.
3. A recent article told the story of a couple that, come the time, wanted to die rather than go to a nursing home. (Whether or not they were sick was not in question.)

The committee can be sure that such scenarios were not part of the original euthanasia legislation in the areas concerned. It would have started, as it is doing so here in Australia, with being for terminally ill patients only.

Consider also the following issues, the effects of which are longer term and unable to be measured overseas at this point:

1. What do such laws teach future generations about the value and purpose of every human life?
2. What do such laws teach citizens about how politicians, government and lawmakers view the value of a human life?
3. How do such laws affect culture?
4. How do such laws impact the issue of suicide in a nation in the long term?
5. How do such laws impact the issue of depression in a nation in the long term?
6. What potential long term mental and possible eventual self-harm risks are friends and families of killed patients exposed to as a result of their loved one being euthanised?
7. What would be the financial cost to the nation of assisting those affected by the person who has been killed?
8. How can a government guarantee completely that the already observed slippery slope will not deteriorate even further?

The fact that this issue is just not as simple as proponents of law change like to make out was demonstrated by Peter Singer. Singer is an outspoken "ethicist" who is infamous for his support of euthanasia, abortion and infanticide. But even he, when the issue of assisted dying became personal and about his mother who had Alzheimer's had to admit that he could not support ending her life. According to his published work, he should have been quick to kill her, but instead he confessed that "Perhaps it is more difficult than I thought before, because it is different when it's your mother". This statement shows us the flaws in his naturalist worldview and should caution us from adopting opinions of others who share similar perspectives. Why should we follow their teaching when they themselves do not?

Just because their intentions may be well meant does not give us reason enough to justify introduction of euthanasia. The consequences of such laws are very real and well documented and we would ignore these consequences to our long-term peril. Any government that proceeds despite the strong argument against such laws is doing its people a huge disservice and would in fact be negligent to its duties of serving, protecting and providing what is best for its people. I implore the committee not to be impressed by the popular, self-proclaimed experts in the public sphere but to rather examine the risks with due diligence. We dare not ignore them.

It is not the case that euthanasia laws are inevitable and, before the committee gets into the details of what such legislation might look like, I implore it to consider first the most important question facing it today, that of whether we should have such legislation at all. The evidence from other countries indicates a resounding "No" and demands that we resist such change at all costs.

We would be naive to claim that similar experiences would not also occur on Australian soil. We would be foolish and negligent to introduce such laws without fully examining the entire issue including the experiences of other countries and the risks we would expose the citizens of Western Australia to, were this to come into being.