

Submission to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices.

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

Submitted by: Mrs Gwen Wood

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee,

I write to let you know of my profound unease and sincere objection to the proposal for assisted or administered death, or euthanasia.

I have recently seen two BBC documentaries on ABC television, documentaries on this subject. These documentaries showed the system and practices of euthanasia in two countries, Holland and Belgium. Both documentaries were fairly horrendous and it is clear that, once legislated euthanasia is quickly embraced by the medical profession and by those entrusted with the care of fragile persons – whether those persons be terminally ill or not – and administered or assisted death becomes applicable and available to persons for whom the legislation was not intended.

In the Belgium documentary, I witnessed a very well women, with no illnesses, as resident of a very well run and friendly seniors village request and receive a lethal injection. Her reason for the request was her melancholy –she felt lonely and missed her daughter who had passed away a few months previously.

In both countries where euthanasia is legislated and practiced, it is widely available and not used to end a life of suffering but also a wide variety of other reasons no related to reasons outlined in the legislation.

1. Palliative care is so advanced that people today do not need to suffer extreme pain – they are made comfortable as they die;
2. People may request that, apart from pain relief, they receive no life-extending treatment. This request may be in the form of a “Living Will” or simply a request to a caregiver or medical professional.

I object to legislation that would allow the means of death to be put into the hands of those requesting it or into the hands of those caring for fragile persons. Such legislation would be a retrograde step for our society, and could easily endanger the lives of many.

Yours sincerely,
Gwen Wood 20th Oct. 2017.