

Martin Zydek

21 September 2017

The Joint Select Committee
End of Life Choices
Level 1, 11 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Submission in relation to the inquiry into the need for WA Laws to allow citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own end of life choices.

General Position

- I am firmly of the opinion that there is already sufficient scope within the current WA laws in respect to citizens being able to make their own choices about their end of life options.
- I firmly do not support any changes to the current WA legislation which would provide additional avenue for voluntary or doctor assisted euthanasia.

In my opinion assisted dying can never be completely safe and voluntary.

Vulnerable people succumbing to euthanasia are often suffering from depression, mental illness, fear, coercion from family members and loneliness. They require support & assistance and not a quick "end it" solution.

Our duty as a society is to provide support & assistance to the sick and vulnerable and we will be judged on how we have provided to those most in need. Everyone has the right to be loved and cared for, and supported until they die. By permitting "assisting suicide" we show the community the some forms of suicide are acceptable.

In regards to euthanasia, as it involves the assistance of at least one other person, there is always the concern that it can lead to abuse, especially for the most vulnerable people such as the chronically ill, mentally impaired, disabled and aging. Also, the assisting doctor or physician's relationship changes for one where it is to "care & heal" to providing assistance to "end life".

Finally, evidence from other well intentioned countries such as Belgium or the Netherlands has shown that over time the initial tight constraints and regulation restricting euthanasia to freely consenting and informed adults have been expanded to include many vulnerable people, including

those severely depressed or afflicted by other psychiatric illness / dementia, unconscious people, children & even disabled babies. Most of these are not able to provide informed consent.

How can a government pass laws which will allow a sick child, or an elderly citizen with dementia provide "informed consent" to their own assisted suicide, instead of providing added care and support through treatment & healing?

Parliaments have a duty to its citizens, especially to the sick and vulnerable, and to legislate in favour of the common good. This does not include providing a system whereby we allow those who are often too young or unwell to make irreversible decisions about this ultimately serious issue.

There is no place in our society for the legalised killing of our most vulnerable citizens. They deserve, and we owe to them to provide the best duty of care via treatment and healing, not disposing.

Please ensure that we do not go down the same dark path as other countries have with terrible consequences.

Thank you in advance
Martin Zydek