

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 Mr James Handcock, private citizen

General Position

- 1 I believe that current Western Australian laws on Advance Health Directives and Enduring Power of Guardianship make sufficient provision for citizens to make informed choices about their end of life options.
- 2 I do not support changing State laws to provide for voluntary euthanasia or physician-assisted dying.

Reasoning (My reasons include)

- Legislating death is almost certainly going to involve monitoring and administration (executive arm of government) by the public service. In WA our State Government is under tremendous pressure to cut costs. So no matter how well intentioned the legislature is, stark experience is showing us all that corners are being cut and standards are being lowered. I am unable to perceive how a 'cut corner' when dealing with death, can be rectified by compensation (judiciary).

Our culture is in no position to safely legislate and administrate euthanasia. Subsequently involving the judiciary in sorting out a case of whether a death is 'legitimate' sounds ludicrous to me.

- The frail aged, disabled, chronically and mentally ill are particularly at risk. I am constantly having to accept and adjust to the cost/benefit and risk/reward attitude of our society. Once you overlay the legislation of assisted death, with our culture and actual practice of decision making based overwhelmingly on cost/benefit (to save money), you cannot ever make a law strong enough to protect the vulnerable.

Rhetorically I understand the Dutch model is not working well. The practice has now expanded to include many vulnerable people, including the unconscious, disabled babies, children, people with dementia and psychiatric illnesses, many of whom cannot provide informed consent.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Signed

Date
