

End of Life Choice



Western Australia Parliamentary Report on End of Life Choices 'My Life, My Choice'

Evidence given to the committee from medical experts concerning the context of suffering at the end of life.

- Suffering is not only about physical experience or manifestation of pain. Many other symptoms experienced by people suffering life-limiting illnesses are more difficult for the medical profession to assess, even when acknowledging the symptoms.
- Unsurprisingly anxiety is a common symptom for patients experiencing terrifying breathlessness, and when 'drowning' from fluid accretion in the lungs.
- Palliative care specialists agree that *existential* suffering can present as pain but is unresponsive to traditional pain medications. This suffering can be caused by exhaustion or by the ever limiting quality of life.
- The committee emphasised (about suffering) that "only the individual experiencing it can define it and they alone are able to determine whether the context in which it occurs makes it somehow 'valuable'".
- Dr Rodney Syme, a medical specialist and Past President of Dying with Dignity Victoria, illustrated this point poignantly:

A mother might be able to endure the pain of childbirth because its outcome is so profound and full of hope for the future, but that same woman dying painfully of breast cancer will be unlikely to find hope and value in this different pain. That same mother, perhaps with two young children and a husband whom she loves dearly, will be devastated by such circumstances, and her pain will be of a different kind to that of someone aged ninety with a similar condition who is nearing the end of their natural life.

Reference:

"My Life, My Choice" Report of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, Parliament of Western Australia, 23rd August 2018 .

<http://apo.org.au/system/files/188761/apo-nid188761-994551.pdf>

*Compassion for suffering
The freedom to choose
Add your voice to the call*

SAVES was established in 1983 to campaign for legal, medically assisted voluntary euthanasia. The aim is to end suffering by providing choice in dying. SAVES works in the community and with Members of Parliament to achieve law reform.

SAVE-YA Syndicated Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Youth Advocates

Facebook: Support SAVE-YA Law Reform

A national youth lobby group which aims to provide a youth voice in support of legalising voluntary euthanasia in all States and Territories. Members between ages 18 and 35 are encouraged to join, make contact with their local MP and inform them of their support for voluntary euthanasia law reform.



Christians Supporting Choice For Voluntary Euthanasia

christiansforve.org.au

We are Christians who believe that, as a demonstration of love and compassion, those with a terminal or hopeless illness should have the option of a pain-free, peaceful and dignified death with legal voluntary assisted dying / voluntary euthanasia. This is strongly supported by the majority of Australian Christians.



South Australian Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying

facebook: SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying

We are a group of passionate nurses who believe in our patient's right to choose the end of life care they wish. The group provides a forum for the nursing voice and perspective on legalising voluntary euthanasia and other patient choices in end of life care.



MY BODY MY Choice-VE

facebook.com/pages/MY-BODY-MY-Choice-VE

MBMC provides a voice for people with disability in the VE reform debate. MBMC represents the interests of people with disabilities who wish to exercise choice in all aspects of their life, including choice at the end of life, with the view that choice and control are a fundamental human right for everyone.

MBMC argues that people with disabilities know how it feels to lose personal autonomy through their ongoing fight for self-determination, independent living and disability rights.

MBMC believes that people with disabilities, who have struggled to control their own lives and bodies, must be allowed to maintain control and autonomy throughout their life, especially at its end.



Doctors for Assisted Dying Choice

drs4assisteddyingchoice.org



We are a national organisation of Australian medical practitioners, both current and retired, who are committed to having a legal choice of providing information and assistance to rational adults, who, for reasons of no realistic chance of cure or relief from intolerable symptoms, would like to gently end their lives.

Assistance may be by doctor provision of medication for the patient to consume, or by doctor-administration.

Respecting rational patient end-of-life choices

Lawyers for Death with Dignity

saves.asn.au/lawyers

Lawyers for Death with Dignity acknowledges the need for people with profound suffering to have the legal choice for a medically assisted and dignified death.

The current law says suicide is not illegal, but assisting suicide is. People in a terminal state may have profound, unbearable suffering and be in the undignified position of being unable to end their life without assistance.

Advances in medicine have improved life expectancy, but South Australian law has not changed to reflect the often forgotten deterioration in quality of life that a longer life expectancy may bring.



Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying

facebook: Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying



Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying is an advocacy group promoting the rights of people to make decisions regarding their end of life wishes.

To go without pain, without trauma, without breaking the law, without endangering others and without suffering. To go gently, peacefully and with dignity.

We support good palliative care, encourage the use of Advance Care Directives and advocate for law reform to legalise the choice for voluntary euthanasia and voluntary assisted dying.