

Voluntary Assisted Dying Ministerial Expert Panel: Information Update February 2019

As you are no doubt aware, the report *My Life, My Choice* by a cross-party Joint Select Committee (JSC) presented in August last year, recommended that the WA Government introduce legislation for voluntary assisted dying.

It also recommended that an expert panel including health and legal practitioners and health consumers be established by the Minister for Health “to undertake consultation and develop legislation for voluntary assisted dying”.

Pursuant to that recommendation, the Minister has established a “Ministerial Expert Panel” (MEP), to which the following persons have been appointed:

- **Honourable Malcolm McCusker AC QC (Chairman)** – Queen’s Counsel and former Governor of Western Australia.
- **Dr Penny Flett, AO (Deputy Chair)** – Retired medical practitioner. Former CEO Brightwater, former Chair WA Aged Care Advisory Council.
- **Associate Professor Kirsten Auret** – Associate Professor of rural and remote medicine and Deputy Director Rural Clinical School of WA, Palliative Care specialist and adjunct Professor Curtin University and Notre Dame University.
- **Dr Scott Blackwell** – General Practitioner with expertise in palliative care and aged care. Former President of the AMA. Life member RACGP.
- **Dr Elissa Campbell** – President Palliative Care WA, Consultant Geriatrician and Palliative Care specialist.
- **Professor Phillip Della** – Head of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine at Curtin University, former Chief Nurse of Western Australia.
- **Ms Noreen Fynn** - Consumer representative with 30 years of experience in the carer, disability, aged care and mental health sectors at community, state and federal level.
- **Ms Kate George** – Company Director and senior lawyer specialising in human rights, international law and indigenous matters.
- **Dr Roger Hunt** – Senior Consultant in Palliative Medicine. Former member of the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying.
- **Ms Samantha Jenkinson** – Executive Director People With disabilities WA (PWdWA) and former acting CEO Australian Federation of Disability organisations. Senior advocate and advisor to government in relation to disability.
- **Ms Maria Osman** – Senior Consultant and advisor for cultural and linguistically diverse communities, former Executive Director of the Office of Multicultural Interests.
- **Ms Fiona Seaward** – Commissioner of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia and Senior Assistant State Counsel for State Solicitor’s Office.
- **Dr Simon Towler** – Clinical Lead South Metropolitan Health Service Futures program. Staff Specialist Intensive Care, Fiona Stanley Hospital. Former Chief Medical Officer Western Australia.

The Panel's Terms of Reference, which explain the Panel's role, and state its Guiding Principles, have now been finalised and approved for public release. They are available by sending a request to MEP.Secretariat@health.wa.gov.au

The Panel has met four times since it was established in December 2018. Taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the "My Life, My Choice" report, the Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 (which becomes operative in June 2019), as well as legislation in overseas jurisdictions, the Panel is developing a Discussion Paper, which will be released by the end of March this year.

Comments and views of the general public, as well as experts on particular issues, will be sought via website survey, community forums and roundtable discussions in the metropolitan and rural areas, over a period of 2 months from the end of March until the end of May this year.

The comments and suggestions, expert and otherwise, thereby obtained, will be collated and used by the Panel to inform its recommendations to the Minister regarding the content of the proposed legislation, which is expected to be introduced into Parliament in the second half of 2019.

Should you seek any further information please contact the End of Life Choices team in the Department of Health via MEP.Secretariat@health.wa.gov.au

Yours Sincerely



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