



22 May 2019

Hon Mark McGowan MLA
Premier; Minister for Public Sector Management; State Development, Jobs and Trade;
Federal-State Relations
5th Floor, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

I wrote to you on 2 April 2019 to express the Australian Medical Association (WA)'s concern about the WA Government's undertaking to draft and introduce voluntary assisted dying legislation to parliament by the end of 2019.

To date, the AMA (WA) has not received a response to this letter and we are yet to see any action taken by the Government which addresses the concerns we raised.

Notwithstanding the arguments 'for' and 'against' voluntary assisted dying, the introduction of legislation on an issue that will have such a profound and irreversible impact on society, requires extensive consideration and public consultation. We maintain that this process should not be expedited in light of political considerations or popular belief.

While we acknowledge that the Ministerial Expert Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying provides an opportunity for the public to comment on a number of identified key legislative issues, the AMA (WA) strongly believes that there must be opportunity for the public and other stakeholders to consider and comment on draft legislation or a proposed system of voluntary assisted dying, before it is introduced into Parliament. Comments in the media by the Deputy Premier make it clear that this will not be the case, as currently planned. As far as we are aware, no candidate from either of the two major political parties in WA made their position on voluntary assisted dying clear during the 2017 election as part of their election platform, yet WA Labor has already committed to offering Labor Members of Parliament a conscience vote on this Government bill. Parliamentarians' well-informed conscientious beliefs must be informed by extensive consultation with constituents. This will not be possible under your proposed timeframes.

Victoria's voluntary assisted dying scheme will allow under certain conditions, Victorians to end their lives from June 2019. This presents the WA Government with the opportunity to continue with its current legislative agenda with the benefit of learning from the experience of an Australian jurisdiction. Given the Government's commitment to propose a safe and compassionate framework for voluntary assisted dying in WA, it is imperative that we observe and understand the impact of Victoria's experience of voluntary assisted dying. This will only be possible following an extended period post June 2019, when Victoria's assisted dying scheme commences.

The AMA (WA) seeks the number of individuals who have attended public consultations on VAD. Further, we encourage you to reconsider the legislative timeframes and implement a considered and informed consultation process on the draft legislation. AMA (WA) believes that this would be a responsible approach to an issue which stands to have an enormous impact on Western Australian society.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Omar Khorshid', with a stylized flourish at the end.

DR OMAR KHORSHID
PRESIDENT