Points to Assist in Advocating to Members of the Legislative Council regarding Proposed Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation for Western Australia.

The Western Australian government introduced the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill to Parliament on August 6, 2019. This was a policy the Government took to the last election.

As our Synod noted in 2018, many within our faith community hold diverse opinions on this topic.

“... members of this Diocese may in good faith hold a diversity of opinions regarding how any proposed legislation on assisted dying is be assessed and responded to and encourages informed and respectful discussion and dialogue on these issues in parishes and communities.”

The Social Responsibilities Commission feels there is great value in an informed Christian response to this proposed legislation and we encourage you to be active on this issue as your conscience dictates.

For those within our Diocese broadly in support of Voluntary Assisted Dying in WA, there was an opportunity to give feedback on the design of VAD legislation and the VAD process to the Ministerial Expert Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying. This opportunity has now closed.

For those broadly against VAD, there remains an opportunity to advocate to Members of the Legislative Council who may, combined, be able to block or amend the Bill. Contact details for the members of the Legislative Council can be found here: http://bit.ly/MLCmembers

The SRC does not advocate for or against Voluntary Assisted Dying. The material given here is for informational use only and no course of action is advised or discouraged.

If you do wish to advocate to Members of the Legislative Council, the following points may be of use.

- You may want to include the fact that the Australian Medical Association, national and WA branches, are opposed to VAD. LINKS: http://bit.ly/VADAMA and http://bit.ly/AMAWAVAD
- You may want to include the fact that most churches remain opposed to VAD.
- You may want to reference the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia’s position against VAD. LINK: http://bit.ly/ACAGSVAD
- You may want to point out that Australia is still a Christian majority country from the last Census.
- You may wish to point out that the morality of secular Australian culture is founded on Christian morality and values.
- You may wish to point out that one Christian view holds the sanctity of life as paramount. That, as a gift from God, humans are not in a position to obviate that gift.
- You may also wish to point out that, despite the caricatures of Christians being focused on life at the detriment of a suffering patient, that Christianity also holds death as sacred. Without death there would be no change, no new life: “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” (John 12:24).
- The sanctity of death is as important as the sanctity of life, as it is through death we enter the greater life. Opposition to VAD then is not about holding onto life; it is about retaining the
sacredness of death for the patient, their family and their community. Just as birth affects and enriches a family and the world, so too does death. Individual choice to end a life damages the corporate sanctity of death.

WRITING YOUR LETTER

(1) READ THE DRAFT LEGISLATION


(2) WRITING TO MEMBERS OF THE MLC IN RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT BILL

- Ask for a commitment to block the passage of the Bill.
- Ask for a personal reply, not a copy of a policy.

(3) ENSURE A REPLY

- If there is no reply after three weeks, write again asking for a reply within two more weeks. This timeframe may need to be shortened depending on the passage of the Bill.

(3) REPLYING TO THE REPLIES

- Reply to all replies.
- Thank those who agree to block the passage of the Bill in the LC. Ask them to advocate for you to other members of the MLC.
- Reply to those who do not commit, stating you are not happy with their decision and that you will continue to advocate on this issue and may contact them again.