

DR ROBERT POLLNITZ

F. R. A. C. P.

CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN

0151863X

MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTRE

1 KERMODE STREET

NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006

Email pollnitz@senet.com.au

OFFICE 08 8267 5333

FAX 08 8267 3811

24th July 2015

Inquiry into End of Life Choices

Legislative Council

Victorian Parliament

Email lsic@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Secretariat,

I expect your Inquiry will receive numerous submissions from those who favour voluntary euthanasia. After over 30 years experience as a consultant physician I have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to design a safe law to permit so-called voluntary euthanasia (lethal doses on request), regardless of any safeguards that may be applied. Experience overseas indicates that enthusiasts will find a window in such law and provide the Nembutal or other lethal agent as they choose, to the disabled and depressed and demented, even to children and babies who have a degree of disability. Victoria already has the problem of young adults with treatable depression gaining access to Nembutal in order to commit suicide.

In Australian medical practice we see the more subtle problem of elder abuse, where the frail aged are easily made to feel they have become a burden to their family that should be removed by them agreeing to a lethal dose. A greedy son-in-law or other person eager to access an inheritance can readily conceal their intention and avoid any penalty.

We are fortunate in 2015 Australia to have world-best standards of palliative care, and I find my learned colleagues in that specialty can relieve almost all physical pain to a tolerable level. Granted this palliative care is not yet fully available in all rural and remote areas, and I submit that your efforts will be best directed towards improving the provision of good palliative care across the State.

With My Best Wishes,

DR ROBERT POLLNITZ