To the Committee of Enquiry

July 29th 2015

We are committed to increasing citizens’ choices for their dying and death.

Our purpose is to contribute to the social movement to bring conversations about and planning for death back into vogue and into our living rooms and coffee houses. Rather than a failure of medicine, the death process is natural, and need not be hidden or masked. Death can serve our living.

Death becomes more uncertain if we just ignore our dying process and wait for others to deal with it. Many if not most don't get the death they want. For example:

Too many spend too long barely breathing before they die. When it happens we often want to be conscious of the experience but end up dying unconsciously.

Too many persist too long with operations or other interventions in an often-vain hope for a bit more time.

We want dying to be pain free and for many it's painful on more levels than the physical.

- We want loved ones there, to be held by our loved ones but are often alone.
- We want to be able to die at home and most times our wish is
denied us. (70% want this, 16% have the experience)

We don’t want our death to be either too early or too long, as is often the case with chronic illness. (Yet 75% with chronic illness hadn’t had conversations about their wishes for their dying and only 10% had a care plan).

Recommendations:

1. That the government increase its support both for the normalization of conversations about dying and increasing the choices for the dying. For example, the Victorian law that stops burials on private or cooperatively owned land should be legalized as it is in NSW.

2. That there is a transparent body that oversees the medical system’s management of the dying to help ensure respect of citizens’ choices.

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