

Thank you to the previous speakers and all attending today including my colleagues from the nursing and medical profession, and other supporters who know **it is time to stand up** for what is right.

My story has highlighted to moral dilemma many health practitioners face regarding end of life care:

A physically weakened dying patient who requires large doses of medication to control their suffering which will also bring forward their death.

Currently the law does not see the difference between this compassionate care and wilful murder.

Once charged with murder, the onus is on the doctor to prove the doctrine of double effect, through a court process.

In other words, prove your intent was to relieve suffering and death was a side effect.

So What to do?

Protect yourself to avoid possible legal ramifications or help the patient and risk being charged.

A huge problem for the terminally ill. They have no say in this decision of their health care provider. They are the ones who suffer needlessly.

My motivation comes from the deep understanding that every living being is an expression of the One life. What hurts you, hurts me.

There is no separation. This is called compassion.

Now, you may ask

Why would a doctor who is passionate about helping others want to be an election candidate? I'll tell you why

Because our society has a big problem . And the solution is political.

Let me explain:

Even though death and dying are a normal aspect of the human experience, our society does not deal with it well enough.

We are fear it

We avoid talking about it

We avoid planning for it

The medical profession tries in vain to avoid it and

As my case illustrates, the outdated 1913 criminal code makes it illegal for anyone to assist it.

The result is much needless end of life suffering and people dying slower and sicker than ever before in a place they would not choose.

**And**

Our political system is failing as a democracy.

Despite decades of overwhelming public support, 51 assisted dying bills have been rejected by our representatives in Australia to date.

Instead of representing their electorates, many politicians have been swayed by their personal religious beliefs or

by fear created by a small vocal minority through misinformation or

have simply preferred to ignore the problem.

Ignoring a problem will not make it go away, hence the repeated attempts at end of life law reform.

This will continue until sense prevails.

Lets see at what this problem looks like with current care options and why this requires our urgent attention.

I will read a story from one of my patients, a young Perth woman ,she writes:

*I am a young Australian woman. My mother died last year.*

*She had cancer. Chemo didn't work.*

*The cancer spread all over her body. A tumour grew in her spine and became so big that it fractured her spine in two places.*

*The slightest movement caused her unbearable pain.*

*Despite palliative treatment, she spent weeks screaming, crying, sobbing quietly and vomiting.*

*She was moved to a specialist palliative care hospice to die.*

*Nothing else could be done for her. She was ready. She asked the doctors: "Can you make me go faster?" And "Can you speed up the process? I'm ready to go."*

*The answer was always "No, but we will give you as much morphine as you need."*

*They call it "palliative sedation". I felt relieved. I thought this would mean my mum would feel no pain. We said our goodbyes. She was much loved.*

*During her final time in Hospice mum was unrecognisable. Her eyes were pointing in different directions. I don't know if she could see. She was choking and gasping for air, but nobody was strangling her. Her torso was all twisted and she was twitching all over. Her hands were shaking.*

*I tried to talk to her, but she couldn't respond.*

*The nurses would come in regularly and give mum more morphine to make her "settle". She would fall quiet for a short period but it wouldn't be long until she started choking, gasping and convulsing again.*

*After suffering in this way for what seemed like forever Mum finally stopped breathing.*

*Watching my mother die like that ruined me.*

*Nobody could guarantee me that she couldn't feel, hear and see whilst she was dying*

*It looked like she was still suffering to the end.*

*I have tried to convince myself that she was completely unaware of what was happening, but the fact is I will never know.*

Please allow a few minutes of reflection in memory of those and their loved ones, who have and **are still** suffering needlessly

.....Is this the best our society can do?

The human experience ( slides)

We are all climbing the mountain of life to the same destination.

Our paths are all different and may include rocky climbs along the way.

For most the hardest climb will be to scale the summit,our final destination.

Some are lucky that this climb has many footholds,

but others face a ragged steep cliff unbearably difficult to climb.

**Which path is ahead cannot be foretold**

Some reach out for help to scale the summit ,

but they do not know if there will be help at hand.

They may be denied and told “you have to do this alone”

the lucky ones will be given a firm helping hand up.

Why is it that those helping hands are not allowed?

Why are many denied assistance?

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I am trying to bring an unregulated covert non universal, but acceptable compassionate medical practice to a workable legal solution.

This will allow universal availability and safeguards for the terminally ill and legal protection for doctors who help their suffering patients scale the cliff of life .

The Freedom of Choice at the End of Life Bill will be introduced after the election by three compassionate forward thinking politicians.

Robin Chapple for the Greens ,Tony Simpson for Liberals and Alannah macTiernan for Labor.

The bill will allow a competent adult who is suffering whilst dying to request medical help to die quickly rather than slowly in order to stop their suffering. This medical help would be an extension of excellent palliative care.

This would ensure that all who are climbing their climb to the summit of life will know that help is at hand should their climb become unbearably difficult. What a relief for all to know.

To all Western Australians I say this:

This election will be an opportunity to finally exert your democratic voice to vote for a candidate who says Yes to freedom of choice to the end of life.

Before you vote for someone, ask for their stance on this issue.

Candidate's responses will also be posted on the Freedom of Choice WA website.

To all in the Cottesloe electorate I say this :

Your vote will be important in giving a clear message to politicians that we demand our voice to be respected. Your current member, Mr Barnett does not respect his electorates voice on this issue by refusing end of life law reform.

A Number One Vote for me would be a vote for compassion, then you can choose your preferred party for No 2.

To all candidates who may be elected I say this:

**You are on notice.**

83% of western australians expect you to represent them by supporting the Freedom of Choice at the End of Life Bill when it is presented to parliament later this year.

Your failure to do so would indicate you do not respect the democratic process.

Your failure to support this bill would make you personally responsible for ongoing needless suffering of our most vulnerable, the terminally ill.

It is my hope that politicians can get their fear out of the way and face the fact that sometimes death is a blessing.

And finally to Kate ,

I thank you for your brave expression of your fear for your path ahead.

I promise you this:

I and many others, will stop at nothing to ensure that you will have the Freedom of Choice at the end of your Life.