**Chairman’s message: Voluntary assisted dying legislation**

**Malcolm McCusker, chair of the Ministerial Expert Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying.**

A report by a Parliamentary Join Select Committee called *My Life, My Choice,* tabled in August last year after extensive consultation, found widespread support in Western Australia for a law to enable voluntary assisted dying. It recommended that such a law be introduced.

The report proposed that a panel be appointed by the Minster for Health to consult and then make recommendations to the MinIster on what provisions the law should contain.

Acting on that report, the Minister for Health appointed a panel to provide expert advice on the development and implementation of a voluntary assisted dying law.

The thirteen members of the panel have a range of relevant disciplines and experience including, but not limited to, clinical and legal.

It’s my great honour to chair such a distinguished, committed group.

Over a two month period from late March until late May this year, the panel will consult widely, seeking opinions and submissions on a number of important and relevant questions.

All submissions and opinions will be carefully and respectfully considered and published on the panel’s website unless confidentiality, of course, is requested.

The result of these consultations will help the panel to make its report. So we would welcome all comments and suggestions, remembering however, that it is not the panel’s task to recommend whether or not there should be such a law, but to recommend what provisions such a law should contain.

If the Western Australian parliament enacts a law for voluntary assisted dying, it will do so in the knowledge that there is strong community support in principle, as the report *My Life, My Choice* noted, and that its content and its detail will have been very carefully considered by the Ministerial Expert Panel following extensive consultation with the community and experts to make the law both compassionate and safe. And safety should be stressed.

Death comes, of course, soon or late to all of us. It’s not death that most people fear but the manner of our dying. The proposed law would aim to give some people greater choice than is, under our present law, possible.

[ENDS]