# Voluntary Assisted Dying Ministerial Panel: Information update

**February 2019**

As you are no doubt aware, the report *My Life, My Choice,* by a cross-party Joint Select Committee (JSC) presented in August last year, recommended that the WA Government introduce legislation for voluntary assisted dying.

It also recommended that an expert panel including health and legal practitioners and health consumers, be established by the Minister for Health “to undertake consultation and develop legislation for voluntary assisted dying”.

Pursuant to that recommendation, the Minister has established a Ministerial Expert Panel (MEP), to which the following persons have been appointed:

* **Honourable Malcolm McCusker AC QC** – barrister, former WA Governor (Chairman).
* **Dr Penny Flett, AO** – retired medical practitioner. Former CEO Brightwater, Former Chair WA Aged Care Advisory Council (Deputy Chair).
* **Associate Professor Kirsten Auret** – Associate Professor of rural and remote medicine and Deputy Director Rural Clinical School of WA Palliative Care specialist and adjunct Professor Curtin University and Notre Dame University.
* **Dr Scott Blackwell** – General Practitioner with expertise in palliative care and aged care.

Former President of the AMA. Life member RACGPs.

* **Dr Elissa Campbell** – President Palliative Care WA, Consultant Geriatrician and Palliative Care specialist.
* **Professor Phillip Della** – Head of Curtin’s School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine.
* **Ms Noreen Fynn** – consumer representative with 30 years of experience in the carer, disability, aged care and mental health sectors at community, state and federal level.
* **Ms Kate George** – Company Director and senior lawyer specialising in human rights, international law and indigenous matters.
* **Dr Roger Hunt** – Senior Consultant Central Adelaide Palliative Care, widely published in the areas of ethics, law and palliative care.
* **Ms Samantha Jenkinson** – Executive Director people With disabilities (pWd) WA and former acting CEO Australian Federation of Disability organisations, senior advocate and advisor to government in relation to disability.
* **Ms Maria Osman** – Extensive experience within and across diverse communities, extensive cultural competency, cross-cultural awareness and capacity to build partnerships with people from all sectors of society.
* **Ms Fiona Seaward** – Commissioner of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia and Senior Assistant State counsel for State Solicitors Office.
* **Dr Simon Towler** – Clinical Lead South Metropolitan Health Service Futures program. Staff Specialist Intensive Care, Fiona Stanley Hospital. Former Chief Medical Officer Western Australia.

The Panel’s Terms of Reference, which explain the Panel’s role, and state its Guiding Principles, have now been finalised and approved for public release. They are available by sending a request to MEP.Secretariat@health.wa.gov.au

The Panel has met four times since it was established in December 2018. Taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the *My Life, My Choice* report, the *Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* (which becomes operative in June 2019), as well as legislation in overseas jurisdictions, the Panel is developing a Discussion Paper, which will be released by the end of March this year.

Comments and views of the general public, as well as experts on particular issues, will be sought via website survey, community forums and roundtable discussions in the metropolitan and rural areas, over a period of two months from the end of March until the end of May

this year.

The comments and suggestions, expert and otherwise, thereby obtained, will be collated and used by the Panel to inform its recommendations to the Minister regarding the content of the proposed legislation, which is expected to be introduced into Parliament in the second half of 2019.

Should you seek any further information please contact the End of Life Choices team in the Department of Health via MEP.Secretariat@health.wa.gov.au

Yours faithfully,

Malcolm McCusker AC QC

## Malcolm McCusker AC QC

**Chair, Ministerial Expert Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying**

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