

## Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation

The Board of Alzheimer's WA supports the West Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019 legislation with the safeguards proposed.

Alzheimer's WA believes in people's right to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing throughout their lives. When a person is diagnosed with dementia their right to make informed choices does not automatically end at time of the diagnosis.

A person living with dementia should be supported in making decisions and expressing preferences about future care for as long as possible. Individual preferences for care and treatment will vary but the right to choose should be supported.

Completing an Advanced Health Directive enables a person living with dementia to be very specific about what treatments they would accept and when, including refusal or withdrawal of treatment. Alzheimer's WA recommends people living with dementia be supported to develop, and regularly review, their Advanced Health Directive.

The West Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019 recognises the importance of giving people genuine choice and autonomy over their decision making and will allow eligible people at the foreseeable end of their life to access voluntary assisted dying, while ensuring a range of mandatory protections, approvals and reviews for these decisions are in place. The 102 safeguards mean that a person without capacity and deemed not able to give informed consent cannot access voluntary assisted dying, even if previously specified in an Advanced Health Directive. This will assist in protecting the vulnerable and avoid coercion.

Alzheimer's WA supports the proposed legislation.

– Ends –

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### Notes to media:

Stories in the media about dementia may prompt concerns or cause distress for audiences and readers. When writing or talking about dementia, please encourage your audience/readers with the number for our Customer Support line on 1300 66 77 88, a free call, telephone information and support service.

### What is appropriate language for talking about dementia and why we need it?

The words used to talk about dementia can have a significant impact on how people with dementia are viewed and treated in our community. In particular please avoid the use of the

# ALZHEIMER'S WA STATEMENT



word sufferer or suffering – the preferred language is a person/people living with dementia. Please read the [Dementia Language Guidelines](#) that have been developed by people living with dementia and carers.

## **About Alzheimer's WA**

As the dementia experts Alzheimer's WA works with those living with dementia and the organisations that care and support them, to have the greatest beneficial impact on their dementia journey.

Our client services, advocacy work, training and consultancy programs are based on a philosophy of understanding the lived experience of dementia. We are guided by people living with dementia and our approach views dementia as a holistic experience for the person rather than just a biological illness. Call our Customer Support line on 1300 66 77 88 or visit [www.alzheimerswa.org.au](http://www.alzheimerswa.org.au)