**Chairman’s message**

It is my honour to chair the Voluntary Assisted Dying Ministerial Expert Panel appointed by the Minister for Health to provide expert advice on the development of voluntary assisted dying legislation.

Details of the 13 Panel members are in Appendix 1. They cover a range of relevant disciplines and experience, and it is my great pleasure to be working with such a distinguished and committed group of people.

The Panel’s brief is to take the findings and recommendations of the Report by a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee, *My Life, My Choice*, tabled in August last year, and develop a policy position that will inform the development of legislation for compassionate and safe voluntary assisted dying.

The Joint Select Committee Report provides a framework for legislation to enable voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia but further consideration is required to determine how the framework should be implemented and work in practice.

From March until May this year the Panel will consult widely. It will discuss and consider the Key Issues with a number of relevant questions.

These questions are not intended to limit discussion, but to guide and prompt discussion.

The Panel will be guided by, and adhere to, the Principles stated later in this discussion paper, the essence of which is respect for human life and human rights.

Throughout the consultation period, the Panel will listen carefully, and always respectfully, to differing views, comments and suggestions.

Submissions that are considered by the Panel will be published on our website unless the submitter requests confidentiality.

All feedback provided will help to inform the Panel’s final report and recommendations to the Minister for Health.

If the Western Australian Parliament enacts the proposed legislation, it will do so in the knowledge that such a law has strong community support (as the Joint Select Committee Report *My Life, My Choice* noted), and that the content and detail will have been very carefully considered by the Ministerial Expert Panel, following extensive consultation with the community and experts.

Death comes, soon or late, to all of us. It is not death that most fear, but the manner of our dying.

This proposed law aims to give some people a greater choice than is, under present law, available.

I believe that the Panel will, assisted by the consultations I have mentioned, provide advice and recommendations which will enable that aim to be met.

Malcolm McCusker AC QC

Chairman Ministerial Expert Panel