

## **PALLIATIVE CARE STATEMENT**

**PALLIATIVE CARE IS SPECIALISED HEALTH CARE OF DYING PEOPLE, AIMING TO MAXIMISE QUALITY OF LIFE AND ASSIST FAMILIES AND CARERS DURING AND AFTER DEATH. PALLIATIVE CARE DOES NOT SET OUT TO EXTEND A PATIENT'S LIFE BY ARTIFICIAL OR INTRUSIVE MEANS.**

**EUTHANASIA IS ABOUT DELIBERATELY ENDING A PATIENT'S LIFE**

**PALLIATIVE CARE WA DOES NOT SUPPORT ANY ACTION WHICH HAS THE DELIBERATE INTENTION OF TERMINATING A PATIENT'S LIFE.**

- ? Euthanasia is a confusing term and means different things to different people. There is a wide divergence of views about what euthanasia is.
- ? It is important that there is informed public discussion about euthanasia and palliative care. Palliative Care WA will continue its role in educating the community about what palliative care is and what it provides patients and their carers.
- ? Palliative Care WA believes that state-wide adequate funding of community-based programs and specialist inpatient palliative care facilities, both to the highest national standards, should occur before embarking on further debate over euthanasia.
- ? Palliative Care WA supports the need for legal status for advanced directives, living wills or enduring power of attorney in a medical setting. WA is one of two states that does not have that legislation in place. It is also important that formal processes covering access to and use of advanced directives accompanies any legislation. In this era of informed decision making it is important that a patient's wishes are known.
- ? Palliative Care WA also supports the need for reform of criminal statutes which presently may be interpreted to limit the rights of patients to decline treatment and the role of doctors to withdraw or refrain from providing futile life-prolonging treatments.
- ? Palliative Care providers in Western Australia will continue to offer a safe and comforting environment for their patients and their carers.