

What's happening in Parliament ?

CABINET approves the drafting of an ADVANCED HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE BILL

Following the release of the "Medical Treatment for the Dying Discussion Paper" and an analysis of the huge response to this paper (over 600 submissions were received) the Attorney General has taken drafting instructions for a new bill to Cabinet.

The bill is to be drafted by Parliamentary Counsel with advice being provided by the Crown Solicitors Office, not the Department for Health which wrote the discussion paper and developed the drafting instructions.

While work has not yet commenced, the bill is scheduled for introduction into Parliament during the autumn sitting, which commences on the 7th of March 2006 (it sits for three days and then has two weeks recess!). With the winter recess commencing on 30th of June 2006, there are only 33 sitting days in the autumn session.

Once the Attorney General is satisfied that the bill has been appropriately drafted, it will go back to Cabinet for approval to print and then may be introduced almost certainly into the Legislative Assembly. Government bills can start in the Legislative Council, but it is rare and, in this case unlikely, as the initiator of the bill (Mr McGinty) is a member of the Lower House.

Following the first reading of the bill, the accompanying explanatory memorandum and the second reading speech will be placed on the Parliamentary web site.

Following the second reading speech the bill must lie for three weeks, so WAVES members will have some time to examine the bill and the accompanying documents before the crucial second reading debate (where each member may speak once!). If there is concern raised about provisions in the bill, either House can move that it be sent to the Legislative Council's Legislation Committee or, more rarely, a Select Committee.

Amendments are usually moved during the consideration in detail phase when each clause is examined and voted on. So, if modification to the bill is needed members of the Legislative Assembly will have to be lobbied. Of course with the similar process to take place in the Council there is opportunity to raise issues in that place as well but in practice most of the action happens in the Assembly.

Watch developments in the press and on the website
www.parliament.wa.gov.au



ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

NEW BILL, BUT NOT FOR VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA !

WAVES Committee is planning to hold a **RALLY** in April/May to alert the general community to the inadequacy of the proposed Bill. We must confront the Attorney General and the Premier with the reality of the situation in WA and the fact that this Bill does not address our needs.

According to Mr McGinty, the Bill "*will give certainty when dealing with end of life issues, enabling terminally ill people to govern their medical treatment and protecting medical professionals who adhere to their wishes*". We need to make it clear to Mr McGinty that:

- * **"end of life issues" also include our actual death and we should be able "to govern our medical treatment" during this part of our life.**
- * **voluntary euthanasia is not about "taking a life" but about allowing a terminally ill person to be assisted to die peacefully at his/her request.** There is a distinct difference!

We need to have a strong voice, so please try to attend this rally, if you are able to. Call, write or email us to let us know if you will participate, and leave your contact number so we can keep you informed. Please, consider this a very important opportunity for you to contribute to our cause.