



30 June 2021

STATEMENT

HEADS OF CHURCHES CALL FOR CONTINUED CONVERSATION ON VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

The Association of the WA Heads of Churches has called on the community to ‘keep the conversation going’, even after voluntary assisted dying becomes legal in Western Australia from 1 July 2021.

The Most Reverend Kay Goldsworthy AO, Chair of the Association and Anglican Archbishop of Perth, said the new legislation should not be the end of discussion and debate on what was a difficult and divisive issue for many.

“The passing of legislation does not change the very firm belief of Christians that life is a sacred gift,” she said.

“While it may represent a legal resolution, we are deeply aware of the moral dilemma many people considering accessing the legislation will face, and the significant moral challenges it poses for Christian people for whom life in communion with God begins with the understanding of human life as sacred.

“As in the wider community, we acknowledge that there is a broad range of views within church communities. It is important that open conversations continue.”

The Heads of Churches have welcomed the increased funding for palliative care services in Western Australia announced over the past 18 months, including additional inpatient and community-based support services, increased regional staff, the establishment of the State’s first children’s hospice, and greater palliative care support for residential aged care facilities.

The WA Heads of Churches is also committed to ensuring individuals and families can also receive pastoral care.

“Death and dying is part of life which we do not approach lightly or take for granted. We will continue to care for people, whatever the choices they are making, in a spirit of love and compassion,” said Archbishop Goldsworthy.

ENDS

The Association of WA Heads of Churches includes leaders from many large Christian churches, including: Anglican Diocese of Bunbury, Anglican Diocese of Perth, Australian Christian Churches in WA, Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, Coptic Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church, Quakers Australia, Syrian Orthodox Church, Seventh Day Adventist WA Conference, The Salvation Army