



Health Professionals Say No!

Open Letter to Premier Gutwein Re: End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill 2020

On August 27, Independent MLC, Michael Gaffney introduced the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill 2020 into the Legislative Council, proposing the introduction of voluntary assisted dying to our State. The introduction of the proposed legislation would create a significant alteration of end of life care for the people in Tasmania.

Health Professionals Say No! is a national network of over 800 healthcare professionals who are concerned about the implications of legalising euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide for the Tasmanian public. The introduction of such legislation will have serious consequences for Tasmanians and should undergo a full and thorough parliamentary enquiry before any parliamentary debate on this issue commences.

State and Territory Governments in Australia considering such a serious and far reaching legislative change, inclusive of Victoria, the ACT, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland, have at least conducted a substantial Parliamentary Inquiry over a period of at least 12 months. The terms of reference of such inquiries should include a review around the equitable provision and access to Palliative Care, Aged Care, Mental Health and Social Services.

Like in other States and Territories, no legislation of this nature should be considered until this process of inquiry is concluded. In particular, it is important to hear from the whole Tasmanian community about their experience of palliative care and other services and of gaps in accessibility to such services.

The members of Health Professionals Say No! therefore call on the Tasmanian Government to support any motion moved in the House of Assembly to establish a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into 'End of Life Decision Making and Care', with broad terms of reference and an extended reporting period of approximately 12 months. This process should not be hurried in the current climate where public hearings would be hampered by the need to limit travel and to observe social distancing. Thank you for your considered review of our request.

Yours sincerely,

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And 755 medical professionals, lecturers and experts from throughout the nation.

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