



**Health Professionals Say No!**  
[www.healthprofessionalsayno.info](http://www.healthprofessionalsayno.info)

July 22, 2021  
The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP  
Premier of New South Wales  
52 Martin Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Premier

We write to you as an independent secular network of over 850 health care professionals dedicated to the care of the chronically ill and dying. Of the 400 represented in NSW, many have been or are in coal face or leadership positions, or with other significant associations in NSW Health and care institutions. We oppose the involvement of healthcare in state-sanctioned killing and reject the misleading notion that ‘compassion’ demands VAD legislation. False promises of an easy solution to suffering only projects an illusion, sidelining the societal and health care actions required to compassionately ease suffering (1). We seek, instead, to support you toward the provision of the real care needed to achieve this in NSW.

We are particularly concerned by recent announcements from Mr Alex Greenwich MP regarding the release of a draft bill to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide in this state, with a view to tabling the bill in September of this year. Good laws make it easier to do right, but the suggested VAD legislation makes mistakes, abuse and coercion more likely, eroding the protection owed to our vulnerable citizens; the latter being the true duty of good government. These concerns are also shared by the less vocal of our society who feel intimidated in speaking out within a populist media. (See sample emails attached\*)

We unfortunately also see the necessity of reminding you of the remarkable stresses facing NSW Health, our institutions, community services and residential aged care, whilst negotiating pandemic conditions and State Health agendas. The implications of the Royal Commission into Aged Care, the National Inquiry into Disabilities and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy serve to compound the negative impact of the timing of such a bill in NSW (2). These enquiries have all confirmed fears surrounding high rates of abuse, risks of coercion, problems of accessibility to care and the current real needs amongst vulnerable social groups, First Nations people and those in regional settings (3). Our priority at this time, should therefore be toward equitable delivery of accessible quality and evidenced based care.

We therefore ask you to hold to the reported commitment made to your party room in August 2020, that divisive or contentious social issues will not be debated during time allocated for Government business in your current term of government (4). Thank you for considering our most urgent request.

Yours sincerely

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On behalf of all signatories of [www.healthprofessionalsayno.info](http://www.healthprofessionalsayno.info)

1. [https://www.mja.com.au/system/files/issues/209\\_07/10.5694mja17.01217.pdf](https://www.mja.com.au/system/files/issues/209_07/10.5694mja17.01217.pdf)
2. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>  
<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/research-report-nature-and-extent-violence-abuse-neglect-and-exploitation-against-people-disability-australia>  
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/monitoring-and-reporting/fifth-plan/5th-national-mental-health-and-suicide-prevention>
3. <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/senator-pat-dodson-rejects-assisted-dying/news-story/0e197ab55ec79ace970e78a8dd2e6a3>
4. Clennell A. Gladys Berejiklian won't force vote this week. The Australian. 20 Aug, 2020

\*Sample of recent emails sent to our Network

Received 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021

To all of those who wrote the article in the newspaper, thank you. I have been very upset at the speed the VAD laws have been pushed through parliament. I have looked at the Oregon and Canadian models, which they are basing it on, and I am horrified that they want to include mental illness. I am a carer. I have worked with palliative care in hospital and home settings, and have been privileged to observe some gentle, calm and very kind passings, with families getting to spend time getting and giving memories to all the family. You just need the resources.

My son died by suicide, after getting introduced to a euthanasia group. He was completing his final year of his PhD and he couldn't get enough help for his depression. He was 26 and had a copy of "The Peaceful Pill". I am scared for how many of our children will be led to choose the 'easy way' out.

I have also observed influence of family, in the quest for property, I have observed health care been managed on a business model, rather than a client needs model.

I am nothing special but my son [REDACTED] was. No-one should feel they need to die prematurely. So once again, thank you and good luck.

Kindest regards,

Lynn Renolds

Received 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

I write this email with some trepidation as I have not voiced my opinion on the 'Voluntary Assisted Dying' discussion.

However, after seeing your one page article in the Saturday paper, I feel it's ok to speak up.

I 100% agree and support your statements.

I am an educated 52 year-old female who is happily married, raised two children and work full time. And yes I have a personal story that one would question why I would not support VAD, but I do not. My reasons to oppose VAD have never been religious and yet I have always felt uneasy to speak up due to subjection of bullying and harassment. I assume there are others like me that are reluctant to get involved in the debate due to the ridicule from those quick to judge, key board warriors.

I just want to thank you and let you know there are many that support and share your views.

I feel sad that social media has become so intimidating that to oppose popularist thinking is not respected or encouraged.

My gratitude to the healthcare professionals that will always fight for life.

Many thanks.

Miranda Lang