

Michael Ferguson MP

Liberal Member for Bass

Liberal Member for Bass

Shadow Minister for Education and Skills

Shadow Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology



23 September 2011

Right Reverend John D Harrower OAM

Bishop of Tasmania

Anglican Diocese of Tasmania

GPO Box 748

HOBART 7001

Dear Right Reverend Harrower

Thank you for your letter of 16 August 2011 in which you express your opposition to the Dying with Dignity Bill proposed by the Greens Leader, Nick McKim.

I consider the Greens' proposed euthanasia legislation as an ill-conceived attempt to condone assisted suicide. Mr McKim is trying to create the impression that people are not being allowed choices in their treatment. Current systems do give people choice. Medical interventions can be withdrawn.

The term 'dying with dignity' has long been associated with palliative care, pain management and compassionate end-of-life care. Sadly, this new debate is being held when there are unaddressed gaps in Tasmania's palliative care services – including the availability of dedicated, publicly funded, palliative care beds in Northern Tasmania.

I know that many palliative care practitioners feel upstaged and disappointed that their best opportunity to advocate for better services and support is being taken from them.

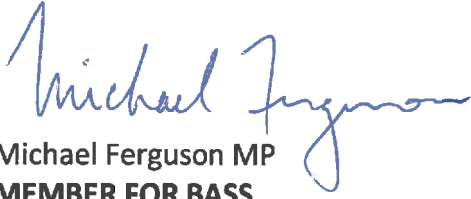
Instead of advocating for improved palliative places and services Mr McKim and Ms Giddings have opened an ill-conceived debate with this bill.

People like me who have a strong belief in the sanctity of life will always fight harder for improved health services.

I have no problem with medically-sanctioned withdrawal of interventions when life is being artificially and painfully prolonged by medicines and machines. However, this is current medical practice and involves family discussion.

I appreciate you sharing your concerns with me and please be assured that I will oppose any such bill in the Tasmanian Parliament.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Ferguson".

Michael Ferguson MP
MEMBER FOR BASS