



# Catryna Bilyk

## Labor Senator for Tasmania

Kingston Plaza  
20 Channel Highway  
KINGSTON TAS 7050

PO Box 320  
KINGSTON TAS 7051

*on blog*

Ref: DH

25 August 2011

The Right Revd John Harrower OAM  
Bishop of Tasmania  
Anglican Diocese of Tasmania  
GPO Box 748  
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Revd Harrower

Thank you for your letter of 16 August 2011 regarding euthanasia.

Generally, the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party permits its members a conscience vote on matters concerning voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Personally, I am deeply concerned about any proposal that allows assistance to be provided to a person for the purpose of ending their life.

While I appreciate that assisted suicide legislation may include various safeguards, I am not convinced that any such legislation can have safeguards sufficient to guarantee that the patient requesting assistance is mentally capable.

While I appreciate that often palliative care patients experience suffering or a loss of dignity, other factors, such as depression, family pressure and the feeling of being a burden, could also lead a terminally ill patient to seek assistance.

I also have advice that advances in palliative care have meant improvement in the available medications making them more effective in relieving suffering.

I appreciate that euthanasia is a sensitive and complex issue and that members of the community have strong views about dying with dignity, compassion and with minimal pain.

Phone (03) 6229 4444  
Toll free 1300 855 225  
Fax (03) 6229 4100  
Email [senator.bilyk@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.bilyk@aph.gov.au)



I can assure you that I have listened carefully to both sides of the debate and have thought long and hard about my position.

In relation to adequate funding for palliative care services, I can advise that, during Palliative Care Week (22-28 May 2011), the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon. Mark Butler MP, announced an \$8.6 million boost to improve palliative care support and services for patients, their families and carers.

The Australian Government will provide Palliative Care Australia with up to \$3 million in funding to purchase new specialised palliative care equipment. A further \$5.6 million in grants of up to \$150,000 will be provided to 81 community groups, health and aged care providers and charitable organisations.

This brings the Australia Government's commitment to the National Palliative Care Program to over \$23 million.

I hope this addresses your concerns on euthanasia and palliative care.

Thank you once again for taking the time to share with me the Tasmanian Anglican community's views on these important matters.

Yours sincerely



CATRYNA BILYK  
SENATOR FOR TASMANIA