



29 August 2011

LISA SINGH
LABOR SENATOR FOR TASMANIA



The Right Reverend John D Harrower OAM
Bishop of Tasmania
GPO Box 748
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Bishop

Thank you for your letter of 16 August 2011 regarding euthanasia. While there is no proposal before the Federal Parliament regarding voluntary euthanasia per se, issues around the palliative and end of life care remain important topics of ongoing discussion and I appreciate you taking the time to share the Anglican community's view with me.

I share your view that a just society will seek to protect and support the weakest and most vulnerable among us. Those members of our community subject to the ravages of chronic and terminal disease, as much as any member of our community, deserve decent and compassionate treatment. Palliative and end of life care must be sufficient to reduce their pain and suffering to the greatest possible extent. Our respect for life must include a respect for quality of life.

However, when a person can face the world through suffering and only suffering, and when a person has decided they have no reasonable prospect of improvement or enjoyment, then that is not life. In those circumstances, I believe that a humane society is compelled to provide an option for a sufferer to voluntarily end their life with the dignity in which they have lived it.

I believe that sufferers of chronic and terminal disease must have the choice: to face their illness with the full support of a well resourced palliative care service, or have access to assistance from a physician to end their own life. This choice must be genuine, entirely free of coercion or pressure from any others, and subject to appropriate safeguards to ensure that it is not abused.

I agree that life is precious, and should be treated as such. I believe that this is consistent with a safe legal framework in which people are able to make the most fundamental choices about their life when they judge it cannot continue in a dignified manner.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to share your views with me.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Singh
Labor Senator for Tasmania

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