



Senator Nick Sherry Labor Senator for Tasmania

22 August 2011

Mr John D Harrower OAM
Bishop of Tasmania
GPO Box 748
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Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter regarding euthanasia.

As you are aware, euthanasia is unlawful in Australia. States have legislative power in respect of euthanasia and it is currently an offence in each State to counsel or aid a person to commit suicide. Commonwealth laws are consistent with these State laws.

The Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995 contains offences for using a carriage service to access or distribute suicide-related material with the intention of counselling or inciting suicide, or providing instruction on a particular method of committing suicide.

Senator Bob Brown has indicated he will be moving a Private Member's Bill to restore the ability of the self-governing Territories (the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and Norfolk Island) to legislate in relation to voluntary euthanasia.

It is appropriate that Members of Parliament be able to vote according to their conscience on this issue. The Labor Party has previously allowed Members of Parliament to express their views on this issue with a conscience vote on the substantive issue of euthanasia.

If a conscience vote on Senator Brown's Bill is called for, there is no reason that Government members would not be afforded the opportunity to express their views on this issue with a conscience vote.

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.

Kind regards

Kristy Goss
Electorate Officer
On Behalf of Senator Nick Sherry