

Parliament House  
Hobart Tasmania 7000  
Telephone (03) 6233 2373  
Facsimile (03) 6233 6266



10A Marlborough Street  
Longford Tasmania 7301  
Telephone (03) 6397 7408  
Facsimile (03) 6391 1385  
Mobile 0418 125 234  
Email [m.polley@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:m.polley@parliament.tas.gov.au)

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## SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Hon Michael Polley, MP

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11 November 2011

The Right Reverend John Harrower, OAM  
Bishop of Tasmania  
Anglican Diocese  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Church House  
125 Macquarie Street  
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Reverend Harrower

Further to my letter of 29 September, in response to the Church's concerns over the current euthanasia debate and my subsequent representations to the Minister, I am in receipt of a response from the Minister for Health.

I note that the Minister has responded to you directly on this matter, however, I thought it prudent to forward a copy of the response I too received.

As always, if I may be of assistance on any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Polley'.

Michael Polley, MP  
Speaker of the House of Assembly  
**MEMBER FOR LYONS**

**Minister for Health  
Minister for Children  
Minister for Sport and Recreation  
Leader of Government Business**

Ground Floor, Public Buildings, 53 St John Street, LAUNCESTON TAS  
Ph: +61 3 6336 2685 Fax: +61 3 6336 2640

Level 8, 10 Murray Street, HOBART TAS  
GPO Box 1470, HOBART TAS 7001 Australia  
Ph: +61 3 6233 0804 Fax: +61 3 6233 4980  
Email: [Michelle.O'Byrne@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:Michelle.O'Byrne@parliament.tas.gov.au)  
Web: [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au) [www.development.tas.gov.au/sportrec](http://www.development.tas.gov.au/sportrec)



WITS No.: 63927

**Hon Michael Polley MP  
Speaker of the House of Assembly  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000**

- 8 NOV 2011

Dear Mr Speaker

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 September 2011 regarding the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania's affirmation of its opposition to voluntary euthanasia. I have acknowledged the organisation's concerns about the protection of the vulnerable in response to Reverend Harrower directly, and I welcome this opportunity to share the response with you.

Palliative care service and medical professionals throughout Tasmania have been providing quality care for people at the end of their life for many years, and this Government is committed to the continued provision of high quality palliative care services throughout Tasmania.

Quality palliative care directly addresses the suffering and dignity of patients, and offers hope that their independence can continue as long as possible.

The Department of Health and Human Services (the Agency) is working on a number of initiatives to improve the care that people receive at the end of their life. These include advance care planning strategies that encourage people to record their wishes for their care in a document called an Advance Care Directive, and ensuring that doctors and hospital staff provide consistent and appropriate care in line with the patient's wishes in the event that the patient can no longer communicate.

Many people will and do exercise their right to opt not to receive intensive treatment as the end of their life nears; it is lawful that their wishes be respected, and this is entirely different from euthanasia.

Thank you once again for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

Michelle O'Byrne MP  
**Minister for Health**