

Dear Fellow Heads of Churches,

End of Life Choices Bill 2020

We are writing to you to seek your support in opposing the End of Life Choices Bill 2020 (EOLC). We have reached a critical point in the campaign to legalise assisted suicide and euthanasia in Tasmania. For the first time in the history of the State, a house of parliament has passed a Bill to legalise assisted suicide and euthanasia.

The EOLC Bill after passing the Legislative Council on 10 November 2020, and gone through a first reading in the House of Assembly, now awaits second reading speeches to take place, mostly likely from 3 December 2020. In the next couple of weeks prior to these speeches it will be critical that we get as many as possible within our Christian community to contact their local members of the House of Assembly to express their concerns about the EOLC Bill and the negative impact it will have, if passed, on the Tasmanian community, in particular the most vulnerable.

We would therefore be grateful if you could speak to your pastors/ministers in your network of churches and encourage them to speak to their congregations about this important issue asking them to take action, either through writing letters or emails to their members of the House of Assembly or seek an in-person meeting to express their concerns. We would recommend that pastors/ministers preach on the issue to highlight its importance.

We would also ask you as leaders in the Christian community to seek to meet with your local members to express your own concerns.

We have prepared some materials to assist you and your congregation to take action. We cannot stress just how important it is for the Christian community to speak up strongly on this issue at this time. If the EOLC Bill was to pass many innocent lives would be ended prematurely when they still have so much to give and experience.

If you have any questions about this material or require any further assistance Ben Smith, Director of the Life, Marriage and Family Office of the Archdiocese of Hobart is more than happy to help. He can be contacted at ben.smith@aohtas.org.au, 0410 691 371, (Ben has been acting as the spokesperson for the 'Live and Die Well' organisation which was formed in early 2020 to fight against this Bill. You can find further resources on their website <https://livendiewell.org/>)

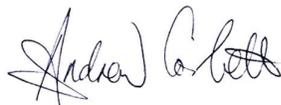
As you might be aware on 10 November the Premier announced that if the EOLC Bill does pass the second reading stage in the House of Assembly he has asked UTAS to establish an Independent Review Panel to consider the Bill and related end of life matters and provide a report to government. The Premier has also indicated that he believes the UTAS review will allow stakeholders to make submissions. If this opportunity arises we would encourage all Christian churches to make a submission. Again the Archdiocese of Hobart, through Ben Smith, is happy to assist you in preparing such a submission.

Once the second reading speeches have concluded and parliament has risen for the Christmas period the likely Committee Stage of the Bill will take place from sometime in late February-March, 2021. We will get back in touch with you early in 2021 to outline further ways you and your congregation will be able to contribute to the defeat of this Bill.

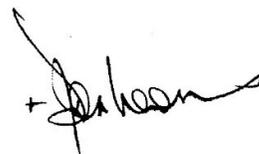
Yours in Christ



Bishop Richard Condie



Dr Andrew Corbett



Archbishop Julian Porteous