

Subject: This bill is much more dangerous than others

Dear [Name]

I am opposed to the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)*, released by Alex Greenwich MP for public consultation in July.

The Greenwich Bill removes more than a dozen protections that were present in the bill rejected by the NSW Parliament in 2017 (**2017 Bill**).

These are just a few examples:

- The two doctors required to sign off on a patient's death are no longer required to be independent of each other. Independence was required in the 2017 Bill;
- Neither doctor signing off on a patient's death needs to be a specialist in the illness they are suffering. At least one needed to be a specialist in the 2017 Bill;
- The doctors do not even need to meet and examine the patient in-person; they can sign-off on a patient's death via telehealth. The 2017 Bill required both doctors to meet the patient;
- The 2017 Bill required a mandatory psychological assessment of the patient. The Greenwich Bill requires no mental health assessment;
- The 2017 Bill required mandatory reporting to the coroner; the Greenwich Bill removes this requirement.

There are many others.

If the NSW Parliament rejected a much stricter bill in 2017, it is outrageous to think that MPs would countenance passing a much more dangerous bill just four years later.

As a state, we can do better than an unsafe euthanasia and assisted suicide regime.

Please vote 'no' to the Greenwich Bill.

Thank you.

Subject: Unbearable pain not main reason for overseas euthanasia

Dear [Name]

I am writing to oppose the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)*, released by Alex Greenwich MP for public consultation in July, which aims to legalise both euthanasia and assisted suicide in New South Wales

In places where euthanasia and/or assisted suicide have been legalised, data shows that those who are asking to die are, in the main, doing so for reasons that have nothing to do with the experience of pain.

In Oregon, where assisted suicide has been legal for the last 20 years, the top 5 reasons given for requesting assisted suicide do not mention untreatable pain. The top reasons given are:

- Losing autonomy (90.6%)
- Less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable (89.9%)
- Loss of dignity (73.6%)
- Burden on family, friends/caregivers (47.5%)
- Losing control of bodily functions (43.1%)

Only one in four mentioned inadequate pain control or a concern about it as a reason for requesting assisted suicide.

The legalisation of assisted suicide and euthanasia would have the result of responding to mental and emotional suffering with lethal force.

As a state, we can do better than this.

Please vote 'no' to the Greenwich Bill.

Thank you.

Subject: Elder abuse and euthanasia a dangerous mix

Dear [Name]

I would like you to vote against the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)* which has the aim of legalising both euthanasia and assisted suicide in New South Wales.

In recent years, it has become apparent that elder abuse and the risk of elder abuse are increasing threats in Australia. If an individual is unable to take care of themselves, has reduced decision-making capabilities and/or financial management issues, their vulnerability to be pressured into euthanasia by family members or others responsible for their care increases.

The World Health Organisation has estimated that the prevalence of elder abuse in high- or middle-income countries ranges from 2% to 14%. More than 15% of Australia's population is aged 65 or over, and more than 80% of Australians over the age of 85 are living with a disability.

A 2015 NSW Parliamentary inquiry revealed shocking accounts of elder abuse. The Committee Chair, Hon. Greg Donnelly MLC, wrote:

*"Within the context of the many priorities that governments juggle, abuse of older people can be overlooked, perhaps because elder abuse tends to be hidden away. Perhaps it is because of the ageism that exists in our culture, that allows us to disrespect our elders and tacitly accept disempowerment as an inevitable outcome of frailty. Perhaps it is too threatening for many of us – because we ourselves will one day be old and frail — to see this abuse for what it is: exploitation of and in some cases violence towards people who are vulnerable, people who in many cases are the least able to protect and defend themselves."*

These are extraordinary words, and reveal the risk of elder abuse: not in an abstract sense, but here in NSW.

An Australian Law Reform Commission recommended a detailed study into the prevalence of elder abuse in this country, and a national plan combat elder abuse to be agreed between federal, state and territory governments.

This has not yet happened.

It would be recklessly negligent of the NSW parliament to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide in the state before putting in place a system to effectively address the scourge of elder abuse. If we cannot tackle elder abuse, there is no reason to believe that we can adequately safeguard against abuse when it comes to euthanasia and assisted suicide for our vulnerable elderly.

Please protect our elderly and vote 'no' to the Greenwich Bill.

Thank you.

Subject: Now is not the time for euthanasia

Dear [NAME]

I am writing to ask you to not only vote against the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)*, but to resist any moves to have it debated in Parliament.

The outbreak of the Delta variant of COVID-19 has been described as a 'national emergency' by both Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant.

It has caused untold suffering to individuals and families, particularly in the Local Government Areas subject to the strictest lockdowns.

There is a greater sense of isolation and desperation experienced by so many people, evident in the fact that on Monday, 2 August, Lifeline recorded the highest number of calls in a single day in its 58-year history.

This isolation is being felt especially in the sick and elderly, with hospital visits either banned or restricted to one person per stay, and those in aged care or living in retirement villages once again deprived of visits from friends and relatives.

There is never a good time to push euthanasia and assisted suicide, but trying to push a pro-suicide message at this moment is especially callous. It is also irresponsible to use up valuable NSW Parliamentary debate time on a contentious social issue, when so much more is at stake.

Please resist any debate of the Greenwich Bill, and vote 'no' if it does come before Parliament.

Thank you.

Subject: Medical community overwhelmingly against euthanasia

Dear [Name]

Please vote against the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)* which has the aim of legalising both euthanasia and assisted suicide in New South Wales.

It is not clear to me why the NSW Parliament would be countenance euthanasia and assisted suicide when the medical community is so overwhelmingly against it.

The Australian Medical Association has been consistent in its opposition to the legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The AMA's official position is that 'doctors should not be involved in interventions that have as their primary intention the ending of a person's life.'

The World Medical Association is even stronger against it. The WMA Statement of Physician-Assisted Suicide reads: "Physicians-assisted suicide, like euthanasia, is unethical and must be condemned by the medical profession."

Across the world, 107 of the World Medical Association's 109 constituent National Medical Associations oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Those who most closely deal with the sick and dying reject the idea that parliaments would allow them and their peers to kill patients instead of heal them.

In 2017, 105 Australian palliative care specialists signed an open letter, pleading with the Victorian government to not legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Instead, Australia's palliative carers asked for adequate resources to help them to care for those at the end-of life. And they rejected the active and deliberate undermining of their work in an effort to push these laws through.

Please listen to our medical professionals and vote 'no' to the Greenwich Bill.

Thank you.

Subject: Prioritise palliative care in NSW

Dear [Name]

I am writing in relation to the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)* which has the aim of legalising both euthanasia and assisted suicide in New South Wales.

If the NSW parliament is serious about providing choice to the terminally ill, then its first priority should be with ensuring that all NSW residents have access to properly resourced palliative care, no matter where they live in the state.

NSW currently has approximately 91 FTE palliative care specialists for the state, or just 1.1 palliative medicine specialists per 100,000 population. To meet Palliative Care Australia's benchmark of 2 FTE specialist palliative medicine physicians per 100,000 population, NSW should have almost double the number of palliative care doctors it currently has.

While this lack of available palliative care has significant effects in regional NSW, there is a lack of palliative care even in major hubs.

For example, Westmead Hospital, which serves a population of 1.85 million and has almost 1000 beds has no dedicated palliative care beds at all.

Legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide in the state before ensuring that all residents have access to high quality palliative care is irresponsible and goes directly against the notion of 'end-of-life choices' being thrown around. Without accessible palliative care, this phrase is a misnomer, and will effectively leave terminally ill patients with the false choice of pain at the end of life, or euthanasia or assisted suicide.

Please support palliative care and reject the Greenwich Bill.

Thank you.

Subject: Regional, rural and remote healthcare in NSW

Dear [Name]

I am writing to ask you to reject the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 (Greenwich Bill)*, which Alex Greenwich MP has released for public consultation. The Greenwich Bill aims to legalise both euthanasia and assisted suicide in New South Wales.

Mr Greenwich and others who push for legalised euthanasia and assisted suicide in NSW in the name of end-of-life choice.

However, the full picture of health care availability and end-of-life choices available to NSW residents, particularly those in regional, rural and remote NSW is not yet available.

A current NSW Legislative Council Committee inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote NSW (**Inquiry**) is currently underway, with hearings continuing until December and the Committee's report not due until next year.

While there is still a long way to go in this Inquiry, submissions and testimony so far have outlined the lack of ordinary health care, not to mention palliative care, in rural, regional and remote parts of the state.

Legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide in the state before the Inquiry concludes and the full picture of access to health care in rural, regional and remote NSW is realised is irresponsible, and shows that the push for 'choice' by euthanasia advocates is nothing but a veneer.

Please reject the Greenwich Bill.

Thank you.

### **Shorter Sample Letter 1**

Subject: Euthanasia Bill

Dear [Name]

I am writing to request that you vote against the euthanasia bill. During this COVID pandemic where the Governments and communities are struggling to get on top of the virus it would farcical to legalise doctors killing patients or assisting their suicides.

Thanks.

### **Shorter Sample Letter 2**

Subject: Assisted Suicide Bill

Dear [Name]

I am opposed to any attempt to water down our homicide laws, including legalising so called “mercy killing” by allowing doctors to poison patients they have never treated. This puts vulnerable people including dementia patients at risk.

I ask you to vote against any attempt to legalise mercy killing.

Yours sincerely,

### **Shorter Sample Letter 3**

Subject: Greenwich’s VAD Bill

Dear [Name]

I hear the VAD bill doesn’t require consultation with the family doctor or even the family.

Please oppose it.

Regards,

#### **Shorter Sample Letter 4**

Subject: Assisted suicide bill

Dear [Name]

I'm concerned that our society is on the decline, with euthanasia and assisted suicide laws in other States. NSW is and has to be different. We must protect the vulnerable who might think they are burdens.

I'm relying on you to oppose this bill.

Cheers,

#### **Shorter Sample Letter 5**

Subject: VAD bill

Dear [Name]

This guy Greenwich seems to have a death wish. First abortion, now assisted suicide. He must be stopped.

Please vote against his bill.

Yours faithfully,

#### **Shorter Sample Letter 6**

Subject: Euthanasia

Dear [Name]

You surely wouldn't be supporting this killing bill? I expect you to oppose it firmly.

Best wishes,

#### **Shorter Sample Letter 7**

Subject: Thou Shalt Not Kill

Dear [Name]

You should agree with this principle which underpins our criminal laws and epitomises the Judeo/Christian ethic.

Please fight against this evil bill.

Yours sincerely,

### **Shorter Sample Letter 8**

Subject: Protect our aged and infirm

Dear [Name]

The lessons from the few countries where assisted suicide is practised is that as time goes by, the so-called protections are watered down. In Holland children can now be legally killed by their doctors.

Don't let this State go into such a decline. Vote and fight against this Bill.

Regards,

### **Shorter Sample Letter 9**

Subject: VAD Bill NSW

Dear [Name]

As my local member I expect that you will vote against this bill. It cures no-one and offers no real protections against abuse.

Currently our laws protect vulnerable people from gold-diggers. Support those laws and reject the proposed VAD laws.

Regards,

### **Shorter Sample Letter 10**

Subject: No Euthanasia

Dear [Name]

A couple of years ago the Parliament rejected a similar Bill. This Bill has fewer protections. I'm counting on you to reject it.

Kind regards,