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## **Message of the Catholic Bishops of New South Wales regarding the Euthanasia Bill before the New South Wales Parliament**

The Catholic Bishops of New South Wales call upon our State parliamentarians to reject moves to allow doctors to administer lethal drugs to the terminally ill. We also call on the faithful to pray that our community will safeguard the lives of all vulnerable people, including the terminally ill, and give them appropriate care.

Last week Greens MLC Hon. Cate Faehrmann introduced the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2013* which would legalise euthanasia in our State.

Despite talk of 'dignified death', dignity is not served by telling the old and dying, *through our laws*, that they would be better off dead and we would also be better off if they were dead. Rather, they need reassurance that whatever their state of health or personal difficulties, they are loved and will be supported.

Despite talk of 'compassionate death', compassion is not expressed by killing those who are suffering. True compassion should drive us to do all we can to address people's pain, loneliness or fear. No one could pretend that everyone who needs palliative care now receives it. Suicide rates are too high already in this state.

Despite talk of 'patient autonomy', legal euthanasia would bring pressure to bear upon vulnerable people to 'volunteer' for early death. Overseas experience shows that others will be involuntarily euthanased once a country goes down the euthanasia path. There can be no guarantees that patients are not being pressured by others or made feel a burden and unwanted. Depressed and vulnerable people would be more so under such laws.

The Bishops of New South Wales are convinced that we can find more positive ways of dealing with terminal illness and other suffering than offering lethal injections to already vulnerable people. The Euthanasia Bill is unsafe and unnecessary.

**George Cardinal Pell  
Archbishop of Sydney**

on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of New South Wales

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