

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.