



1 August 2017

To all Members of Parliament in Australia

The Asia Pacific Hospice and Palliative Care Network promotes access to good-quality hospice and palliative care for all in the Asia Pacific region. We value every moment of life and do not support any action that has the intention of shortening a person's life. Restoring dignity and enhancing quality of life is the basis of palliative care.

We do not support the deliberate ending of life and we view with concern moves in certain jurisdictions in the region to legalise physician-administered euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. Licensing doctors to administer or supply lethal drugs to seriously-ill patients has no place in the practice of health care. Such moves devalue the dying and undermine society's responsibility to protect its most vulnerable members.

Australia and New Zealand are acknowledged leaders in fostering palliative care development in the Asia Pacific region. In much of this region, pioneers are struggling to establish good end-of-life services in the face of little political and financial support. Eighty percent of the world's dying has little or no access to morphine for pain relief.

The United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have been ranked as the top three countries worldwide in the 2015 Economist Quality of Death Index . The eyes of the world are on these nations and on how they discharge their responsibilities to dying people.

For those of us trying to improve end-of-life care, licensing doctors to provide or administer lethal drugs to patients poses serious risks of sabotaging efforts around the globe to convince governments that pain relief and good end-of-life care are basic human rights.

The Asia Pacific Hospice and Palliative Care Network appeals to you therefore to recognise your responsibilities on the world stage when considering any proposed legislation before you.

Yours faithfully

Associate Professor Cynthia Goh  
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