

CDU-ARA-14-024/011

## An open letter to

the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

23 May 1995

RE: RIGHTS OF THE TERMINALLY ILL BILL

As a group of medical practitioners we wish to indicate to you our support for this proposed legislation. We feel that it is one of the most important pieces of social legislation to be introduced in a long time. Competent adults who find themselves in an intolerable and hopeless situation should have the right to exert some control over their circumstances and request assistance to die. We are confident that suitable safeguards can be put in place to ensure that only those who truly wish to avail themselves of such legislation can do so and that marginalised groups such as Aboriginal people and the frail elderly can be reassured that this is so and that they are not at risk.

We noted with interest the comments of Mr. Poole, the chairman of the select committee. On the 7 30 Report of 17 May, he stated that, after reviewing all the submissions to the committee, he felt that 60-70% of people in the community supported the Bill. The report of select committee states that overall 72% of submissions were in favour of euthanasia or the right of choice of the individual.

This proposed legislation deals with an important and *personal* issue where an individual's decision to request euthanasia has no direct ramifications for the community at large. It is essential that legislation reflect the wishes of the community and not special interest groups.

We strongly urge you to support the Bill. If you are unable to support the Bill as it is, we would urge you to support any amendments towards an "assisted suicide" Bill. If your *personal* beliefs are such that you cannot truly represent your constituents on this issue and are unable to support the Bill in any form, we would urge you to abstain from voting on the Bill.



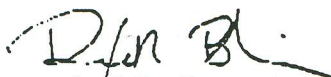
Dr. Steven Skov



Dr. Robyn McDermott



Dr. Greg Winterflood



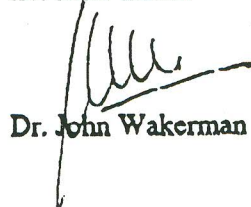
Dr. Ruth Berlin



Dr. Karl Horsburgh



Dr. Peter Tait



Dr. John Wakerman



Dr. Jenny Gray

Dr. Ben Ewald

