



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**CHURCH WELCOMES RELEASE OF VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING DISCUSSION PAPER**

The Uniting Church Victoria-Tasmania has welcomed the release of the voluntary assisted dying discussion paper developed by the Premier Lara Giddings and Tasmanian Greens Leader Nick McKim.

Synod Liaison Minister Reverend Carol Bennett said the paper would greatly assist community debate on the important issue of assisted dying legislation.

Ms Bennett said while the Uniting Church did not have a position on assisted dying the Presbytery of Tasmania's Standing Committee had asked a working group to formulate a response to the Giddings-McKim paper.

She said she understood that there was a divergence of opinion about the issue within the wider community – including differing views among Christians – and believed the paper adequately addressed many concerns through a range of proposed safeguards.

“This is an issue which it is important for people to talk about. And even within our own Church there are differing views,” she said.

“What must be remembered is that we are all currently operating in an unregulated environment (when it comes to assisted suicide) and that carries risks for those in the medical profession as well as vulnerable people in society.

“It is my view that the safeguards offered should address many of the concerns around vulnerable people feeling pressured into choosing to end their life.”

Ms Bennett said Ms Giddings and Mr McKim had drawn on the experiences from jurisdictions which currently had dying with dignity legislation in place, including Washington and Oregon in the United States and The Netherlands.

She said that the Uniting Church actively supported the provision of high quality palliative care services and the need for a “good death”, where a person’s spiritual needs were considered as well as their physical needs.

“I would encourage all Tasmanians to read the paper and consider responding by the closing date for submissions so that the views of as many people as possible can be considered by the authors.”

“This is an important debate and one I have no doubt the Tasmanian community is ready for.”

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