

The Australian, 20th February, Matthew Denholm.

An 11th-hour push will seek major amendments to Tasmania's voluntary euthanasia legislation, with Catholic Health Australia warning it will otherwise set a "perilously" flawed precedent other states may follow.

CHA, which operates more than 80 hospitals and hundreds of aged-care centres nationally, has enlisted a QC to prepare amendments to the End-of-Life-Choices bill and is seeking an urgent meeting with Premier Peter Gutwein.

Archbishop of Hobart Julian Porteous will also directly intervene in a direct plea to MPs, warning of the threat of "wrongful death" of the vulnerable due to insufficient

CHA and other opponents, such as Live & Die Well, accept the voluntary assisted dying bill — to be put to a final vote within weeks — appears likely to pass.

However, they warn it is unworkable for faith-based institutions, lowers the bar for such laws nationally, and is "dangerously" lax in safeguards.

Amendments to be put to MPs include allowing entire institutions — not simply individual doctors — to conscientiously object to involvement in VAD.

They would also extend an individual opt-out right, available to "medical practitioners", to all hospital and aged-care workers, including allied health, nursing and administrative staff.

Other amendments, likely to be supported by some MPs, seek to ensure:

- An applicant's usual GP, as well as close family or carer, are informed of a VAD request so they can raise any concerns.
- Doctors with suitable expertise must determine the mental capacity of applicants, and relevant specialists must check their prognosis.
- Applicants must undergo a physical examination and not merely be approved for VAD via telehealth, with their health records also examined.

"It is a matter of grave and mounting concern to members across the country that Tasmania is proceeding down this perilous route unchecked," CHA chief executive Pat Garcia said.

"We are very worried at the lack of adequate safeguards to protect the vulnerable and the fact that this law will force our hospitals and aged-care facilities to offer assisted suicide, which we cannot allow to happen."

Archbishop Porteous pleaded with MPs to "recognise their solemn responsibility to legally protect all human life, particularly the lives of our most vulnerable".

"We believe the public debate so far has not clearly brought to light the full nature of the dangers posed ... in particular the threat of wrongful death," Archbishop Porteous told The Weekend Australian.

"The possibility that one person might die prematurely as a result of this legislation, through family coercion or because they have been given a wrong diagnosis or prognosis, should be sufficient for any reasonable person to reject this bill."