

# South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES)

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ATTACKS FREEDOM OF SPEECH

#### DO WE LIVE IN A DICTATORSHIP?

#### DO WE LIVE IN A THEOCRACY?

The South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (SAVES) expresses shock and outrage at the move of the Rann Government to censor a speech on voluntary euthanasia made by the Hon. Sandra Kanck.

President of SAVES, Frances Coombe, says her organisation had welcomed the initiative taken by Ms Kanck to use a speech in Parliament to challenge the Federal *Suicide Related Material Offences Act*.

“This was a bad law to begin with, an absurd law that targets suicide related information via the internet, email, telephone and fax and yet the same information can be lawfully accessed through non electronic means such as books, conversation and regular post.

The decision by a majority of members of the Legislative Council to prevent the publication of her speech on the state parliamentary website, compounds the damage caused to suffering people.”  
“Here was a chance to challenge this modern day version of book-burning. Instead the Rann Labor Government has backed the Federal Liberal Government.

**SHAME SHAME on the members of the Rann Government, Family First and No Pokies for this assault on freedom of information.** “We congratulate the Liberal Party, the Greens and the Australian Democrats for standing their ground against such a backward step. Even though some of the Liberal Party MPs do not support voluntary euthanasia legislation, they recognised the importance of taking a stand on the important principle of freedom of speech.

“The Government went ahead with this motion, despite it being drawn to their attention that there are more than 15 million references to suicide on the world wide web and that Ms Kanck’s speech was extremely moderate by comparison. In fact, on a number of occasions in her speech she advised people to avoid particular methods.”

“Censoring Ms Kanck’s remarks will not reduce the harm of suicide. It will most certainly contribute to disempowering people, particularly the elderly in our society who are suffering intolerably, forcing them to ill-advised, pre-emptive means of ending their lives.”

**The shame and the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the Howard government overturning the Northern Territory’s Rights of the Terminally Ill Act in 1997, leading directly to an explosion of self deliverance devices, leading in turn to the draconian Federal censorship law - also on our State Government’s refusal to enact voluntary euthanasia legislation.**

#### Contact

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