



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

PALLIATIVE CARE – NOT A ONE ISSUE DEBATE.

The Australian organisations listed below, seeking law reform to permit patient choice for a medically assisted death, call upon Palliative Care Australia to acknowledge its responsibility to **all** suffering people under its care.

We affirm and actively promote the excellent palliative care work here in Australia which is effective for most patients, but no care specialty can be perfect.

Palliative Care Australia itself, in its policy statement on euthanasia,

- Acknowledges that while pain and other symptoms can be helped, complete relief of suffering is not always possible, even with optimal palliative care.
- Recognises and respects the fact that some people rationally and consistently request deliberate ending of life.

Professor Margaret O'Connor, President of Palliative Care Australia, claims that the euthanasia movement is limiting community discussion on end-of-life care (Palliative Care Australia media release 1/2/07) and yet Professor O'Connor also says that the current debate on euthanasia is premature. It appears Professor O'Connor is proposing to limit discussion about this end-of-life choice that has 75% Australian support (Morgan Poll 2002) and is requested by a minority of people as the only means of final release from their unrelievable suffering.

Voluntary euthanasia and palliative care have a common interest in a good death, compassion for suffering, and patient autonomy. We need to be working together, enabling rational and informed debate about all aspects of death and dying, in the interests of **all** suffering people.

Without debate the suffering minority are voiceless.

- **South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (SAVES)**
- **West Australia Voluntary Euthanasia Society**
- **Dying with Dignity Tasmania**
- **Voluntary Euthanasia Society of Queensland**
- **Voluntary Euthanasia Society of New South Wales**
- **Dying with Dignity Victoria**
- **Northern Territory Voluntary Euthanasia Society**

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