



MEDIA RELEASE

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**CRUEL DENIAL OF PATIENTS' RIGHTS
SHAMEFUL DENIAL OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS**

May 25th 1995 - the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act in the Northern Territory.

Former Chief Minister Marshall Perron asks all members of parliament to reflect on the misery caused by the overturning of that compassionate legislation.

In the 8 years since the Territory Act was overturned, well over 80 terminally ill people have been forced to endure a tortuous, lingering death.

Denied choice for voluntary euthanasia, thousands of suffering people around Australia are condemned to die a similar death in future.

BACKGROUND

Voluntary euthanasia (VE) legislation passed the NT Legislative Assembly on 25th May 1995. The world first law gave competent terminally ill adults the right to medical assistance to die in face of severe pain or suffering.

Sponsored by a religious lobby, a private members bill (Euthanasia Laws Act) to overturn the Territory Act narrowly passed the Senate on the 25th March 1997. Had an Australian State passed VE legislation, the Federal Parliament could not have exercised a veto.

During the 9 months the Territory VE law was in place, four people used its provisions to end their suffering by dying comfortably, quickly, at a time of their choosing in the presence of loved ones. The law's safeguards and guidelines enabled compassion, transparency, regulation and control.

Medical assistance to die is a legal possibility in the Netherlands, Belgium, Oregon and Switzerland.

What possible excuse can our lawmakers give for prohibiting our choice for voluntary euthanasia; for forcing us to endure horrific suffering?

SHAME! SHAME! WHEN WILL OUR LAWMAKERS FACE THE FACTS?

Contact

SAVES President Frances Coombe
0404 851 387 / 8336 8994

Vice President Mary Gallnor
8264 3548

Marshall Perron
0417 910 088