

## ***Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia***

**Christians who believe that, as a demonstration of love and compassion, those with a terminal or hopeless illness should have the option of a pain-free, peaceful and dignified death with voluntary euthanasia.**

### **Brief History.**

Rev. Trevor Bensch, former Minister at North Adelaide Baptist Church, and currently Baptist Chaplain at two major hospitals, has been the catalyst for the formation of this group. Ian Wood asked Trevor his views on Voluntary Euthanasia from his Christian perspective. Trevor's response was so supportive Ian suggested he send it to all MPs in South Australia. Hon. Mark Parnell quoted sections of this letter in his speech introducing his VE Bill, and now the letter is in South Australian Parliamentary Hansard.

**Ian Wood is contact and co-ordinator and provides email support for the group.**

### **Principal Activity**

The group's principal activity is sending letters to Members of Parliament in South Australia and generally making it known that many committed Christians support choice for voluntary euthanasia, holding it to be consistent with Jesus' message of love and compassion.

It is intended that all statements be moderate, respectful and based on facts. The group is independent but will complement and work together with the South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (SAVES) and DWD and VE groups in other States and Territories to achieve the necessary change in legislation.

### **Secondary Activity**

The Group is now expanding into other States and letters will also be sent to MPs in those States when appropriate.

### **Other Activities**

Generally making the public aware through the media that there is strong public support amongst the more enlightened and thinking Christians for our legal right to make end of life decisions.

Countering the mis-information put forward by religious opposition to every person's right to a dignified and painfree death.

### **Membership of the group**

**There is no payment of subscriptions or cost involved.**

**However, any donation towards advertising expenses for more members is very welcome.** Please make cheque or money order payable to Christians Supporting Choice for VE.

**Membership** is an expression of that person's willingness to become a "signatory" at the foot of Group letters going to Members of Parliament in any Australian State.

Considerable support has been expressed by non-Christians and ex-Christians for our campaign, and we are happy for these people to join on this basis.

Membership has therefore been divided into two parts

- Christian voters in each State of Australia
- Other support throughout Australia and overseas

The names of all members, in both categories, listed as "signatories" will be added to letters going to the Members of Parliament.

### Contact with Members

- as much contact as possible will be by email. For privacy reasons, all emails to members in the Group will be sent by bcc email, unless they request otherwise.
- **any proposed letter will be circulated to all people involved in the group**, without the inclusion of any names of group members
- **all those who indicate agreement with the content of the letter will then have their names included at the end of the letter as “signatories”**, in addition to the actual signature of the group spokespersons/co-ordinator writing the letter.
- Letters to Members of Parliament will also have address of the signatories listed with their names.
- The group mailing list will not be disclosed to any third party.
- **Please note** – for members without emails, unless requested otherwise, due to delays in the postal system, we will automatically include your name along with other members of the Group, on all letters being sent to our State Members of Parliament.

### Media Releases

All media releases will be sent as a statement from the group without prior approval due to time considerations, and the need to respond quickly to topical items as they arise. However we will endeavour to keep the group informed.

### We do hope and pray

- people from all denominations will be willing to make this public stand.
- that we will receive the support of some prominent citizens to arouse more interest from the media.
- you will feel inspired to discuss the issue of VE with friends and enlist their support, though we appreciate this is not always easy.

Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia would welcome your participation with any ideas and suggestions as to the content of letters, suggestions for media releases, facts and stories that support our aims. Please email or write to Ian Wood at the address below.

Ironically, the main opposition to law reform arises from Christians in the fundamentalist churches. Their dogmatic approach is disturbing, and we are seeking to counteract this.

Many moderate Christians from all denominations already support choice for voluntary euthanasia. It is essential for these Christians to become active, standing proudly in their faith and giving voice to the significant majority of Christian support shown in surveys over the past 15 years.

**Leaflets available.** More leaflets are available to distribute to interested friends if required. We also have a small poster suitable for your Church noticeboard.

**Free fridge magnets**, with our “beautiful sunset” logo are available to supporters of our Group. Simply email or write to the Co-ordinator with your request.

We are an ecumenical group, with Uniting, Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, Church of Christ, Unitarian and Catholic denominations represented!

**Ian Wood**  
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Phone (08) 8632 2272  
(I can phone you back to save on STD charges)

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