

South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc.

Patrons:

Emeritus Professor JA Richardson
Robyn Layton LLB, LLM, QC

Internet: <http://www.saves.asn.au>



Please reply to: **Address:** 11 Boord Court, Dernancourt SA 5075 **Phone:** (08) 8336 8994
E-mail: fcoombe@adam.com.au **Mobile:** 0404 851 387

23/6/03

To all members of Parliament

The present prohibitive law against choice for voluntary euthanasia perpetuates suffering.

Dear Member,

The enclosed letter printed in The Advertiser, Saturday 26th April, comments on the prosecution of Alexander Maxwell who was found guilty of assisting his wife's suicide. Margaret Maxwell was dying slowly after a 9 year battle with breast cancer. While our law continues to perpetuate such suffering, by denying choice for voluntary euthanasia as an option of last resort, there will continue to be a steady and inexorable flow of such tragic situations.

As a further consequence of our law's inability to cope with intractable suffering, it is also inevitable that orchestrated acts of civil disobedience, such as that of the 21 people who sat with Nancy Crick when she took her own life, will continue to shame that law.

Surely our laws are meant to foster the following fundamental values:

- confidence in the legal system
- unconditional compassion
- respect towards the inherent value of human life
- protection of the vulnerable
- protection of doctors
- trust in doctors

To be most effective, our law needs to encourage open and honest discussion about, and accountable options for, relief of intractable suffering, thus enabling people to live as long as possible.

The present law against choice for voluntary euthanasia causes a great deal of social harm. By being flouted continually it is forced into disrepute. Because it is a law that is not serving the best interests of society I urge you, as a lawmaker, to seriously consider the Dignity in Dying Bill 2002 as an urgently needed reform.

Please contact me if you require further information about the concerns I have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Frances Coombe
President