

# **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA SOCIETY (SAVES)**



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*Patrons: Emeritus Professor Jim Richardson  
Emeritus Professor Graham Nerlich  
Emeritus Professor John Willoughby*

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To all Members of Parliament - *Ms Lyn Breuer*

## **Summary of the case to legalise voluntary euthanasia**

- **Even optimal palliative care can not relieve all suffering** - this is widely acknowledged, including by Palliative Care Australia, – refer enclosed paper *A Synopsis Of Disease And Symptoms Which Are At Best Difficult, At Worst Impossible To Control With Modern Palliative and Medical Care*
- **When the excuse of ‘no sufficient safeguards are possible’ is given against the legalising of voluntary euthanasia, consider current legal practise as follows:**  
A person can request that their treatment be withdrawn and withheld, thus causing death. They can also request that their pain medication be increased even though this may hasten death.  
All this can also be carried out legally *without* a patient’s request.  
All this is permitted without such safeguards as exist in the 2 current voluntary euthanasia Bills – see enclosed *“What is in the Bills before the South Australian Parliament?”*
- **Voluntary euthanasia laws are working responsibly without a slippery slope to abuse** – refer enclosed paper *Legal physician-assisted dying in Oregon and the Netherlands: evidence concerning the impact on patients in “vulnerable” groups*
- **The current law prohibiting voluntary euthanasia is not working** – refer enclosed paper *Surveys of Australian doctors’ attitudes to and practises of assisted dying*
- **The current law is driving desperate people to desperate self deliverance** – refer enclosed paper from the *Exit International* website.
- **Palliative care is not threatened by voluntary euthanasia legislation** - refer enclosed paper from *Ranking of Palliative Care Development in the European Union* showing that the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, which have voluntary euthanasia laws, rank highly in palliative care services.
- **81% of South Australians want the dignity to decide**, including a high majority of Christians – refer enclosed paper from *Newspoll Survey 2007*. This figure has been much the same over the past 15 years.

Please contact me if you want any further information.

Yours sincerely,

**Frances Coombe  
President**