

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



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

23rd August 2009

To all Members of Parliament

RELIANCE ON STATED INTENTION MAKES A DISHONEST LAW

Under our present law doctors cannot legally assist patients to die by voluntary euthanasia. However doctors can legally assist patients to die by administering medication to relieve suffering under the principle of “double effect”.

Under this principle a doctor who causes the death of a patient while using treatment to relieve pain and symptoms commits a crime if the death was a “primary intention” but not if it was only a “secondary effect”, even though death is foreseen as a possibility.

The enclosed paper points out that the present law of double effect is:

* irrational * hypocritical * against the interests of patients

RELIANCE ON PROVEN INTENTION MAKES AN HONEST LAW

Under a voluntary euthanasia law the intention of a doctor administering lethal medication is to bring about the death of a patient who is experiencing unbearable suffering and who has requested the medication as a means of final relief.

Voluntary euthanasia legislation is

* rational * unambiguous * in the interests of patients

Common sense and compassion require that you support:

- *Consent to Medical Treatment and Palliative Care (Voluntary Euthanasia) Amendment Bill 2008* - Upper House
- *Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 2008* - Lower House

Suffering patients want good laws. Suffering patients want the dignity to decide.

Yours sincerely,

**Frances Coombe
President**

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