

South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES)

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To all members of the House of Assembly

13/8/04

Do you think that palliative care has all the answers and the Consent to Medical Treatment and Palliative Care Act is all we need?

It is an irrefutable fact that even the best of palliative care cannot alleviate all suffering.

Dear Member,

This fact is widely acknowledged, including by Palliative Care Australia. Despite optimal palliative care, between 5-10% of people continue to experience intolerable suffering and rationally request assistance to die. This figure represents thousands of Australians. Death is the only way in which a minority of suffering people can gain final relief and, without legal choice for voluntary euthanasia, the law effectively perpetuates their suffering.

For your information I enclose a paper entitled "A synopsis of disease and symptoms which are at best difficult, at worst impossible to control with modern palliative care".

Without choice for voluntary euthanasia, our cruel law forces some people to either endure their intractable suffering to the bitter end or desperately seek to end their lives.

If their unbearable suffering forces them to the latter drastic action they are then forced to:

- act pre-emptively whilst they are still physically able.
- research their own death
- often resort to gruesome means of self deliverance
- face the very real and horrific prospect of failing
- do all this alone, whilst suffering most cruelly, without the comfort and support of loved ones.

Can you imagine yourself or your loved ones being one of those 5-10%?

For the love of humanity, please support the Dignity in Dying Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Frances Coombe
President