

May 22nd 2002

To members of the Legislative Council of South Australia

IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE; IMPOSSIBLE TO DIE

Dear Member

The writer of the enclosed letter attempted to exercise her legal right to end her own life. Unfortunately she was forced to do it alone, due to our prohibitive law, and she did not succeed. Such is the experience of some in our society who long for a release from their suffering but which the law condemns them to continue. In reality it is extremely difficult to take your own life.

Instead of release she found herself “detained” under the Mental Health Act in a hospital ward, treated for the most part without compassion and at times with disdain, for two weeks.

Since her release she has consulted additional medical specialists in her desperate wish to gain some quality of life, but without relief.

Now, several months later, she continues to be imprisoned in a rapidly deteriorating body, with daily worsening pain. In her anguished despair she has realised that she has no chance of taking her own life. She asks that you, as our lawmakers, act with compassion to allow her and others the choice of final release from their interminable, intolerable suffering.

Her letter graphically illustrates how some of your constituents suffer by being forced to continue living. She has given me permission to send her letter, but in order to protect her family she has asked that it be sent without her name.

Yours sincerely

Frances Coombe
President