

South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES)

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To all members of the South Australian Parliament

Are you about to be sidelined?

Dear Members,

You may have heard about Dr Philip Nitschke's decision to produce plastic bags for use as a means of suicide (The Australian 10th July). These will be given freely to members of his Exit organization which numbers 2,500 members so far.

Last year I wrote to inform you about the activities of the Self-Deliverance New Technology Group (Nu-Tech) which aims to devise effective and accessible means of self-deliverance, ie. of ending one's life simply and painlessly. The plastic exit bags are a product of this new technology and they, together with the Nutech group, have come into being out of frustration at the reluctance of legislators to legalise and control voluntary euthanasia under medical supervision. Those who wish to end their lives now have easy access to the means to do so, bypassing legislative controls and the medical and pharmaceutical professions. Legislators will no longer have to decide between bringing in a law to permit and regulate voluntary euthanasia, or maintaining the existing halfbaked prohibition, because prohibition will no longer be an option. This is an alarming prospect that opens the way for ill-considered suicide, particularly of the distressed young and the anxious ageing.

The effect of trying to prohibit a service that is demonstrably needed has been either to cause patients to die in unwanted suffering, or make doctors resort to subterfuges to help them. No one should be proud of this unregulated area of medical practice.

It will be in the public interest to counteract these swift and disturbing developments by bringing in a sensible law that puts Parliament in charge. The Dignity in Dying Bill 2002 does that, while leaving patients and doctors full freedom of conscience.

Please give the Bill your support and remain in control.

Yours sincerely,

**Frances Coombe
President**