

South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES)

Patrons:

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Please reply to: SAVES President Frances Coombe

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To all members of the House of Assembly

What is wrong with the law?

Dear Member,

I am sure you would agree that sound laws are essential to represent and protect everyone's best interests. This is not the case with our current law prohibiting choice for voluntary euthanasia, as evidenced by the following:

- The law fails to acknowledge and address the limits of optimal medical care. A significant number of patients persistently and rationally request voluntary euthanasia as the only means of relief from their irremediable suffering. Refer 1.
- The law is continually flouted and thus brought into disrepute. Doctors are being criminalized when following their duty of care to relieve suffering. Seven reputable Australian surveys since 1984 show that many doctors knowingly break the law by acceding to patients' requests for assistance to die. Refer 2.
- The law is directly responsible for the proliferation of self deliverance devices which means:
 - there are no safeguards
 - suffering people have to die pre-emptively while they are still physically able
 - suffering people have to die alone as they fear to involve their loved ones in what could be legally construed as aiding or abetting a suicide
 - the devices could be used against a person's will

These facts point to the failure of our current law and the urgent need for you to support legislation such as the Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 2007.

80% of South Australians want law reform and they look to you, as lawmakers, to provide it.

The facts, together with public opinion, make compelling argument for your affirmative action.

Yours sincerely,

Frances Coombe
President