



End of Life Choice

Newsletter on current debates

Desmond Tutu: when my time comes, I want the option of an assisted death

In refusing dying people the right to die with dignity, we fail to demonstrate the compassion that lies at the heart of Christian values. I pray that politicians, lawmakers and religious leaders have the courage to support the choices terminally ill citizens make in departing Mother Earth. The time to act is now.

Regardless of what you might choose for yourself, why should you deny others the right to make this choice? For those suffering unbearably and coming to the end of their lives, merely knowing that an assisted death is open to them can provide immeasurable comfort.

Today, I myself am even closer to the departures hall than arrivals, so to speak, and my thoughts turn to how I would like to be treated when the time comes. Now more than ever, I feel compelled to lend my voice to this cause."

These words from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu last week restate his support for a change in the law to allow voluntary euthanasia. **This statement, however, goes further, because Desmond Tutu is now saying that he would make use of voluntary euthanasia laws for himself.**



Desmond Tutu delivering Mass on his 85th birthday

Rev Dr Craig de Vos, South Australian spokesperson for *Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia*, and National Convenor Ian Wood have endorsed the words of Desmond Tutu.



Rev Dr Craig de Vos stated **"Our politicians, often guided by their religious beliefs, continue to deny the majority who want the choice of a death with dignity. We want to redress that injustice. Some oppose voluntary euthanasia arguing that it's wrong because it's playing God. So is artificially prolonging life, and so is allowing people to suffer a horrific death when there are more humane options. In an enlightened society this is simply not good enough".**

Desmond Tutu's statement continues:

Just as I have argued firmly for compassion and fairness in life, I believe that terminally ill people should be treated with the same compassion and fairness when it comes to their deaths.

I have prepared for my death and have made it clear that I do not wish to be kept alive at all costs. I hope I am treated with compassion and allowed to pass on to the next phase of life's journey in the manner of my choice.

Throughout my life, I have been fortunate to have spent my time working for dignity for the living. I have campaigned passionately for people in my country and the world over to have their God-given rights.

With my life closer to its end than its beginning, I wish to help give people dignity in dying.

Dying people should have the right to choose how and when they leave Mother Earth. I believe that, alongside the wonderful palliative care that exists, their choices should include a dignified assisted death.

I believe in the sanctity of life. I know that we will all die and that death is a part of life. Terminally ill people have control over their lives, so why should they be refused control over their deaths? Why are so many instead forced to endure terrible pain and suffering against their wishes?

I welcome anyone who has the courage to say, as a Christian, that we should give dying people the right to leave this world with dignity."

Tutu changed his mind over assisted dying two years ago after a lifelong opposition, but had remained ambiguous about whether he personally would choose such a death.

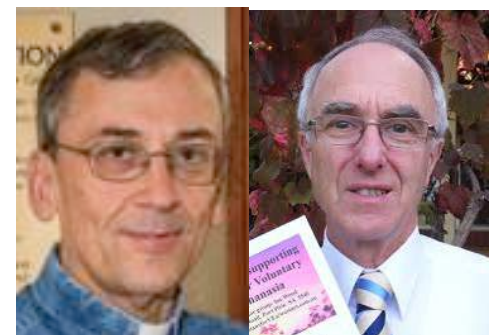
Tutu has been admitted to hospital several times, most recently in September, for recurring infections as a result of surgery for prostate cancer.



Desmond Tutu arrives for Mass

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, has argued for assisted dying to be lawful, saying such a move would be "profoundly Christian and moral". Tutu wrote: "His initiative has my blessing and support – as do similar initiatives in my home country, South Africa, throughout the United States and across the globe."

Tutu won the Nobel peace prize in 1984, headed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa and was described by Nelson Mandela as the "voice of the voiceless".



Rev Dr Craig de Vos, Adelaide

Ian Wood, Mittagong, NSW

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, lives in Cape Town. He made the statement to the Washington Post, October 6, on the occasion of his 85th birthday.

SAVES

South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society

saves.asn.au

Compassion for suffering
The freedom to choose
Add your voice to the call



SAVES was established in 1983 to campaign for legal, medically assisted choice in end-of-life arrangements. The aim is to relieve suffering by providing choice for people at the end of their life. SAVES works in the community and with Members of Parliament to achieve law reform.

SAVE-YA Syndicated Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Youth Advocates

Facebook: Support SAVE-YA Law Reform



A national youth lobby group which aims to provide a youth voice in support of legalising voluntary euthanasia in all States and Territories. Members between ages 18 and 35 are encouraged to join, make contact with their local MP and inform them of their support for voluntary euthanasia law reform.

Christians Supporting Choice For Voluntary Euthanasia

christiansforve.org.au

We are Christians who believe that, as a demonstration of love and compassion, those with a terminal or hopeless illness should have the option of a pain-free, peaceful and dignified death with legal voluntary euthanasia. The overwhelming majority of Australian Christians support choice for voluntary euthanasia.



South Australian Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying

Facebook: SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying
We are a group of passionate nurses who believe in our patient's right to choose the end of life care they wish. The group provides a forum for the nursing voice and perspective on legalising voluntary euthanasia and other patient choices in end of life care.



MY BODY MY Choice-VE

facebook.com/pages/MY-BODY-MY-Choice-VE

MBMC provides a voice for people with disability in the VE reform debate. MBMC represents the interests of people with disabilities who wish to exercise choice in all aspects of their life, including choice at the end of life, with the view that choice and control are a fundamental human right for everyone.

MBMC argues that people with disabilities know how it feels to lose personal autonomy through their ongoing fight for self-determination, independent living and disability rights.

MBMC believes that people with disabilities, who have struggled to control their own lives and bodies, must be allowed to maintain control and autonomy throughout their life, especially at its end.



Doctors for Voluntary Euthanasia Choice

drs4vechoice.org



We are a national organisation of Australian medical practitioners, both current and retired, who are committed to having a legal choice of providing information and assistance to rational adults, who, for reasons of no realistic chance of cure or relief from intolerable symptoms, would like to gently end their lives. Assistance may be by doctor provision of medication for the patient to consume, or by doctor-administration.

Lawyers for Death with Dignity

saves.asn.au/lawyers

Lawyers for Death with Dignity acknowledges the need for people with profound suffering to have the legal choice for a medically assisted and dignified death. The current law says suicide is not illegal, but assisting suicide is. People in a terminal state may have profound, unbearable suffering and be in the undignified position of being unable to end their life without assistance. Advances in medicine have improved life expectancy, but South Australian law has not changed to reflect the often forgotten deterioration in quality of life a longer life expectancy may bring.



BREAKING NEWS...BREAKING NEWS..BREAKING NEWS..BR

Kylie Monaghan died last weekend, the day before a 60 Minutes current affairs segment about South Australia's euthanasia law reform proposals dubbed Kylie's Law.

The 35-year-old cancer patient's voice had echoed around the nation: She said we need choice in terms of assisted dying for the terminally-ill.

Never before has such a plea been so well chronicled – from big screens in Adelaide, to reports in the morning newspaper, to television and radio spots.

In Kylie's case, her sad departure reverberated on television screens around our city, the state and the nation, proving that an individual can make a difference.

From her own self-penned fantasy novel to her euthanasia campaigning, she did not suffer in silence and lived up to the promise delivered in her career which included being a sales consultant for The Flinders News.

Kylie's mother, Shirley Church, said "She was everything – forgiving, self-less. She put everyone first. Even up to the last part of her life, even though she was in pain, she would say, 'I am all right, how are you?'" she said. "She never had a bad word to say to anyone. She could always see the good in anyone."

She said Kylie's Dad Greg Smith and Kylie's husband Daryll and her brothers had gathered around the television set to watch the current affairs program on Sunday amid "mixed emotions".

"I know the day she did the interview with 60 Minutes, she was having a bad day and she wanted to do it and she did it. She was courageous.

"I do think she has made a difference."

"The smile at the end of 60 Minutes said it all."

And then there was silence.

(The Recorder, Port Pirie, 10.10.16)



Kylie Monaghan, BeTheBill