

# SAVES BULLETIN

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NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIA VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA SOCIETY INC. (SAVES)

*'The right to die is as inviolable as the right to life'. Sir Mark Oliphant*

## Robert Brown - challenging the law

*SAVES president Frances Coombe reflects on the life and recent death of a close friend and mentor*

On January 28th my lifelong friend and mentor Robert Brown, "Brownny", ended his life on his own terms at the age of 92. He was fast going blind from macular degeneration, to the point where it was difficult to care for himself.

Brownny was a man of independence and fortitude. He had adapted to his failing eyesight, hearing and cardiac problems with characteristic doggedness and humour. There were many more people worse off he told me.

He told me of a recent time when he had laid down on the floor in front of a Brumby's store. He was feeling wonky due to irregular and slow heartbeat, which had been fully investigated, and knew that he would fall down if he didn't recline. An ambulance was duly called and he was carted off. In a few days' time he returned to the store, apologised for causing angst, and said he had told his friends that all they needed to do if they felt ill was to go and lie down in front of Brumby's and they would get immediate attention. He delighted in the look of consternation on the face of the sales attendant and then quickly apologised once again with a smile.

Up to the week before he died, Brownny would catch the bus into town, buying lunch and a take home meal for tea. As he was noticing daily deterioration of his eyesight he was worried that he would inadvertently step in front of a car, thus causing great trouble for the driver. Either that, he said, or he would be injured from a fall and not be able to return home, instead being obliged to enter a nursing home. From there he would have no control over the way he died.

He told me that he would soon end his own life. He had researched the means thoroughly and practised many times, by necessity, due to not being able to see the mechanism and having to feel his way through the procedure.

Over the past year I would pick him up every week, twice a week when I knew the time was near when he would die, and we would have breakfast together at Norwood; always enjoyable times to be treasured. Up until recently he would collect newspaper cuttings he thought would be of interest to me. We would laugh at the Far Side cartoons he had collected over the years.

All his life Brownny had been an avid reader with a real relish for learning and research. Now he was unable to continue reading despite using the best of assistance devices. Due to his failing vision he spent his days looking for things he had misplaced or dropped and cleaning up from knocking things over. His necessarily slow and careful movements meant hours in the day lost with little achieved. All this he bore, without feeling sorry for himself and he was always ready with a smile when we met.

Brownny wrote a letter to the SA Coroner stating that he would be grateful if his cause of death be given as "rational self-assisted euthanasia". He said there were many people who would attest to the fact that he was not depressed. He was still interested in life and did not want to leave his friends but he did not want to lose control.

His action, in writing to the Coroner, is significant. A recent television interview about Brownny's death featured the Coroner stating that isolation and loneliness are defining features of the circumstances in which a person takes their own life. This is the sad situation under our current law in which a person could face charges of assisting or aiding another to end their own life, merely by being present.

Brownly had the right to decide when enough was enough – it is shameful that the law failed him, leaving him to die alone. The Coroner stated also, understandably, that is difficult to gain objective evidence about the causes and true nature of the high rate of suicide among the elderly.

One means of correcting this situation, which could well aid VE law reform, is for more people, if they find themselves in the rational and dire strait of necessity to end their own life, to write letters to the Coroner, stating their rational actions and circumstances. Such a letter can be left with the person, to be found after their death.

Brownly was a life member of SAVES. We in SAVES have been working since 1983 to legalise VE so that Brownly and others do not have to die alone and in a manner lacking surety and dignity. We must continue to fight for our right to choose a peaceful death.

### **Obituary: Robert Frederick Brown – “Brownly”**

6th Jan 1921 - 28th Jan 2015

Brownly was a truly remarkable man, an honourable man greatly admired, an inspiration to many.

A truly remarkable person dedicated unreservedly to the knowledge and conservation of birds and wildlife more generally.

His long life was devoted to this and other causes through advocacy, direct action and generous financial contributions. He lives on in the hearts and minds of those who loved him.

### **DONATIONS TO SAVES**

*SAVES members continue to be generous donors towards the society's ongoing campaign for law reform. The different initiatives and ongoing work incur considerable costs, even though the society is staffed entirely by volunteers.*

*All donations - large or small - are always welcome. Thank you!!*

## **Law Reform in South Australia**

2015 will see a new Bill to legalise Voluntary Euthanasia and medically assisted dying introduced into the South Australian Parliament. SAVES continues to meet with community leaders, MPs and ‘people in the street’ to maintain discussion about the right for people for whom life has become intolerable to have a legal right to choose when they die.

SAVES is encouraged by the direction of the debate at both a domestic and international level, with a growing number of community leaders publicly acknowledging the need for the law to change. The greater frequency with which voluntary euthanasia is mentioned in mainstream media, TV documentaries, dramas and news reports provides a more encouraging environment for MPs to consider law reform.

Brownly's premature death in January highlights the urgent need to provide peace of mind to people that if their life becomes intolerable, there will be a legal option that when the time comes they can say enough is enough. People will not – out of fear – take action to prematurely end their life, alone and in fear, because there is no legal way to seek medical assistance to die. The South Australian Coroner has indicated that he fears such action may be playing out in homes across the towns and farms and suburbs.

## **A landmark decision in Canada**

On 7th February 2015 the Canadian Supreme Court unanimously (9-0) struck down a ban on assisted-dying for mentally competent adults suffering from ‘grievous and irremediable medical conditions’. The court stated:

*The prohibition on physician-assisted dying infringes the right to life, liberty and security of the person in a manner that is not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.*

It also argued that an absolute ban is not necessary to ensure that vulnerable people are not coerced “to commit suicide at a time of weakness”. The court

said that mentally competent, consenting adults who have intolerable physical or psychological suffering from a severe and incurable medical condition have the right to a doctor's help to die. The illness does not have to be terminal.

It noted that making it a criminal offence under any circumstances to assist another person had left the sick with only two options: suicide "often by violent or dangerous means," or suffering until natural death. The court's conclusion was that "the choice is cruel". It has given federal and provincial governments, which share jurisdiction in the matter, 12 months to draft legislation to respond to the ruling. During this time the existing ban still stands.

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) issued a statement that "recognizes that there are rare occasions where patients have such a degree of suffering, even with access to palliative and end of life care, that they request medical aid in dying." "We believe in those cases... that medical aid in dying may be appropriate."

Recent polling shows that 85 percent of Canadians support the right to die.

#### References

Read the Supreme Court judgement: <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14637/index.do#Toc410917619>

The West Australian 7th February 2015 'Canada top court allows physician-assisted suicide' (from AFP)

### ***"I do not want to die but I am dying...I want to die on my own terms"***

These are the words of 29-year-old Brittany Maynard who elected to die on the 1st November 2014 after being diagnosed with terminal brain cancer 10 months previously. As registered nurse and researcher, Ms Susie Byrne, has noted (1) this was a legal option once Ms Maynard relocated from California to Oregon. This jurisdiction is one of only nine in the world with voluntary euthanasia / physician- assisted dying laws. Of the 1,173 terminally ill and mentally competent Oregon residents that have been given a prescription for a

lethal dose of medication, only 750 have taken the drug since the state's *Death with Dignity* Act was enacted in 1997.

While Ms Maynard's decision attracted both support and criticism she argued "I did this because I want to see a world where everyone has access to death with dignity, as I have had." For the very same reason, but 'closer to home', Ms Byrne heads a group campaigning for the introduction of voluntary euthanasia legislation in South Australia. Susie argues:

"We're all living longer, but not necessarily healthier lives...And as we're ageing, we're becoming debilitated with illnesses like cancer and dementia, which is why more people want that final choice to be available."

Scientific polling shows that over 80 per cent of Australians support the cause, which, as Susie says, has been consistently high for over 25 years. In her role as Convenor of *SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying*, Susie actively lobbies for 'well-safeguarded' legislation that protects patients, doctors and nurses. Alongside other pro-euthanasia groups, Susie is working with parliamentarians on a new draft Bill that would provide qualifying South Australians with access to medication. This Bill will mark the 12th attempt at legislation in South Australia since 1995.

Having cared for many patients at the end of life, Susie is quick to clarify that the proposed legislation is not intended to replace quality care for the terminally ill:

"I am a qualified bereavement and palliative care counsellor and I strongly support the role of palliative care in our health system...Just as we need midwives to bring us into the world, we need compassionate palliative care nurses providing the very best of care at end of life".

#### ***The VE Bulletin is available by email:***

***Please consider this option to reduce postage costs:***

***Email: [info@saves.asn.au](mailto:info@saves.asn.au) to receive future editions by email.***

Based on international data, Susie notes that South Australia's voluntary euthanasia legislation would benefit no more than 30 applicants each year because:

"In my 35 years working in the state's health sector, most patients I've cared for want to live at all costs—they want to spend another day with their family and wouldn't want to end their lives any sooner...But, for those patients in such dire conditions suffering intolerably, this legislation would mean the world to them and their families."

Having taken 30 years to "come out" and publicly support the cause, Susie is well aware the views of *SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying* are not shared by all nurses. "But, it is important for nurses to have a voice, either way."

The group equally supports nurses who oppose voluntary euthanasia by ensuring that the proposed legislation allows any nurse or physician to abstain from participating and have confidence that every safeguard has been considered in the draft Bill. While she is unsure whether she would ever use the legislation Susie argues it is unfair to demand that others don't.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) (SA Branch) policy supports access to voluntary euthanasia, and advocates advanced care directives and other measures that support the choices and decisions of patients. Equally, it supports the right of people to continue with treatment, including all palliative care options that maintain life and the quality and dignity of the lives of people facing a terminal disease. It also believes that nurses and midwives with conscientious objections should be legally empowered to refuse to participate.

#### Reference

(1) 'In Touch' Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Newsletter December 2014/January 2015.

### **Advance Care Directive**

***The new Advance Care Directive is a four page document included in a comprehensive guide that is available free of charge for downloading at [www.advancecaredirectives.sa.gov.au](http://www.advancecaredirectives.sa.gov.au) The website holds additional information including fact sheets, resources and links to help you complete an ACD.***

***For those who cannot obtain the kit online please call Service SA on 13 23 24 during normal business hours to arrange for a copy to be posted for \$5.00.***

***Plan ahead!***

### **AMA challenged to survey doctors**

The Sunshine Coast Daily (12 Jan 2015) reported that Dying with Dignity Victoria (DWDV) vice-president, Dr Rodney Syme, has called on the Australian Medical Association to survey its members on assisted death, citing a recently published survey of doctors in the United States and Europe (Medscape) (1). This revealed that 54% of doctors supported aid in dying for patients with an incurable illness seeking "a dignified death" (up from 46% in 2010).

The recent survey conducted between September and November 2014 included more than 21,000 doctors: over 17,000 in the USA and 4000 in Europe. Dr Syme has been calling on the AMA for fifteen years to do the same. He said "It is clear that medical opinion is divided and the AMA should reflect this by surveying all doctors and at least move to a position of neutrality on assisted dying...but the association has never considered it relevant to seek the views of all members or indeed of the whole medical body in Australia". Dr Syme concurs with the need for the AMA to adopt a neutral stance.

(1) Medscape, owned by WebMD, is an online resource for doctors.



## The Final Project

The November 2014 SAVES Bulletin discussed the high profile media campaign by terminally ill Peter Short ('Tic, toc, tic toc, dying to a killer clock'). Mr Short lobbied politicians and gained a meeting with Prime Minister Tony Abbott who agreed to allow a conscience vote on the issue if brought to parliament. Peter Short also raised funds for the production of a documentary about the last months of his life as an opportunity to continue campaigning 'beyond the grave'. He stated "I really want the law to change, and the probability is that it's not going to happen in my lifetime."

*Dying with Dignity's* Rodney Syme who supported Mr Short stated 'I've indicated to Peter that if he gets to a point where the level of suffering is intolerable for him, and it's unrelievable, I will provide him with some Nembutal so he can die in the way he wants... that knowledge, I think, is one of the things that has kept him going so well. If you can give people with a terminal illness the confidence that they will have control over the end of their life, it's one of the most powerful palliative tools that we have'.

Peter Short's wife, Elizabeth, advised that on 29th December Peter had died from pneumonia after being admitted to a palliative care ward. Peter has been commended for using his own circumstances to campaign for others in the future.

As Dr Syme noted:

*Peter outlived his prognosis by four months because of two phenomena. He had an important purpose that engaged him fully, and gave him a profound reason for living; and he had control over the end of his life which provided valuable palliation... Ultimately Peter died in palliative care. This might seem a paradox, given his energy for the right to die at home at his own time. Dying, however, can be complex, not so easy to control. What Peter was arguing for was choice, and in the end he exercised choice; the actual choice he made is not important, the fact that he had a choice is what matters.*

## Vote Compass

Vote Compass is an online educational tool developed by political scientists. By answering a short series of questions people in Queensland recently determined where they stood on a range of moral issues. One issue was the huge desire for people suffering from terminal diseases to be legally permitted to die with the help of doctors. Findings were based on almost 70,000 people who responded to the proposition: "Terminally ill patients should be able to legally end their own lives with medical assistance". More than three quarters agreed (75.9 per cent), and almost half 'strongly agreed' with people having the right to an assisted death.

It is one of the most significant results to have come from the Vote Compass survey, *with a majority in favour among supporters of all the large political parties, religious groups and age groups*. The issue was put forward by Vote Compass in the Victorian election last November and during the federal election in 2013 with similar results.

Reference: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-28/vote-compass-majority-of-queenslanders-in-support-of-euthanasia/6049750> for more information

## Vale Kep Enderby

*Former Whitlam minister, Supreme Court judge and voluntary euthanasia advocate*

Former ACT politician and Whitlam Government minister, Kep Enderby, died on 7th January aged 88. Born in 1926, Keppel Earl Enderby, or 'Kep' as he was known, studied law at Sydney University. In the early 1950s he practised and studied law in London. In 1970 Enderby entered politics for the Labor Party and was appointed first minister for the ACT and NT in the Whitlam government. As Attorney General he introduced a bill to decriminalise both abortion and homosexuality in the ACT. In an article in *The Guardian* (25th October 2013) he stated that choice for voluntary euthanasia was a civil liberties issue - "If I want to end my life, it's my business."

After his appointment as a justice in the NSW Supreme Court, Kep was a member of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society of NSW (Dying with Dignity NSW) from 1996, and president from 2003-2006. He had many other diverse interests as well as civil liberties issues, and Kep was the co-founder of the NSW Council of Civil Liberties. The Sydney Morning Herald (14th January 2015) stated:

*Enderby was one of Australia's most significant and interesting left liberal intellectuals, who was widely respected, despite disagreements, for the passion and honesty he brought to his convictions.*

## Bequests to SAVES

***Making a bequest to SAVES is one way to make a significant gift furthering the aim of the society. This is to achieve law reform to allow choice for voluntary euthanasia.***

***The appropriate wording for the gift of a specific sum is I bequeath to the South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. the sum of \$.....***

***In the unlikely event that you wish to leave your entire estate to SAVES it would read I give, devise and bequeath the whole of my real and personal estate to the South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc.***

made the important point that the issue of choice in dying is a critical equity issue stating:

*No change is not an option...The present law definitely needs changing. It discriminates and is very bad law. We currently have a two-tier system – one for the people who have the resources and money to go to the Dignitas clinic in Switzerland and another for the majority of people who don't have the resources or money.*

In a supportive editorial the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* argued that 'It's the right thing to do, and most people want it'...*The BMJ* hopes that this bill will eventually become law.

However, the British Medical Association, which represents Britain's doctors, fiercely rejects moves to legalise assisted-dying. The association's position aligns with that of the Australian Medical Association which still has an opposing stance. However Dr Chand implied that the British organisation was out of step with the public.

Guardian columnist, Polly Toynbee, who has written extensively on the issue of voluntary euthanasia law reform, commented on the state of debate in the UK in the context of the 'Falconer' Bill:

*As the Lords debate Lord Falconer's bill on assisted dying today, expect the forces of faith to line the red benches in strength. The 26 bishops will be sending in their men, while rarely seen backwoods Christians and all the other faiths will be there.*

*The right to die is the last great freedom still to be won by my generation, before we all drop off the perch. But as with every other question of the right to control our own bodies and our own fertility, our births and our deaths, the Christians and other religions are pulling out every organ-stop to prevent it.*

*The great majority of people – consistently over 70% in polls for many years – think they should be able to ease their exit from life without being forced by the law and the clerics to endure final months of needless suffering, waiting for God to choose the day. Many of us fear death a little but*

## International news

### United Kingdom

The deputy chair of the British Medical Association, Dr Kailash Chand, speaking in a personal capacity, claims that the law on 'dying with dignity' must, and will, soon change. He

*rightly fear an exit through months in the torture chamber...Assisted dying is a kindness we might all need.*

SAVES acknowledges the high level of support for law reform from people with religious convictions, despite opposition from within religious hierarchical structures. The group *Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia*, an Australian national advocacy group, is one example.

#### References

Perraudin, F 'Assisted Dying Bill held up in House of Lords' *The Guardian* on-line 17/1/2015

Why the Assisted Dying Bill should become law in England and Wales *BMJ* 2014; 349 doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj>. (Published 2/7/2014)

Doward, J "Assisted dying will be legal in the UK 'within two years'" *The Guardian* 9th November 2014

Toynbee, P 'Assisted dying is a kindness we might all need one day' *The Guardian* 7th Nov 2014

### **Death of British campaigner Debbie Purdy**

SAVES Bulletin has previously reported on the right-to-die campaigner Debbie Purdy who lived with multiple sclerosis for almost 20 years. Ms Purdy, who in 2009 won a landmark ruling which clarified the law on assisted dying, died on 23rd of December at the age of 51 after refusing food and water. She had succeeded in arguing that it was a breach of her human rights not to know whether her husband would be prosecuted if he accompanied her to the Swiss clinic Dignitas if her condition worsened.

The decision also went further by ordering the Director of Public Prosecutions to issue a policy setting out when those in her husband's position could anticipate prosecution as the current lack of clarity was a violation of the right to a private and family life. Guidelines in 2010 set out a range of factors to be considered including the motivation of the assisting person, and the ability of the patient to reach a clear and informed decision to end her or his life.

Ms Purdy stated that the 'painful realities' of her condition meant her life was unacceptable:

"It's painful and it's uncomfortable and it's frightening and it's not how I want to live. If somebody could find a cure for MS I would be the first person in line. It's not a matter of wanting to end my life; it's a matter of not wanting my life to be this."

As the UK law still prohibits assisted dying, approximately 80 doctors, writers, actors, clerics and politicians wrote an open letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (28 Dec 2014) stating that an "overwhelming majority" of the public now supported a change in the law. Signatories included Lord Carey, (former archbishop of Canterbury), and Booker Prize winning author Ian McEwan.

They argued that refusing to allow a debate of the issue in parliament would be "heartless", noting that one Briton a fortnight travelled to the Dignitas clinic in Switzerland. Furthermore, for every one person who died in Switzerland, 10 more terminally ill people were taking their lives back in the UK.

#### Reference

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/30/debbie-purdy-death-legalise-assisted-dying-lord-falconer-bill>

### **USA: New legislative activity**

The Oregon Death with Dignity National Centre has released information concerning new legislative activity in the USA. Californian legislators will introduce a Death with Dignity bill in 2015 following 'tremendous momentum' on the issue. Legislators in Colorado, Nevada and Hawaii are also ready to introduce 'Death with Dignity' Bills.

Connecticut may become the fourth state (after Oregon, Washington, and Vermont) to adopt legislation as debate has been active for five years with positive momentum. Massachusetts will also have a bill this year, but the most likely avenue for policy reform may be through a ballot in 2018. Due to a federal ruling the bill cannot return to

the Massachusetts ballot until that time. The 2012 ballot was lost by a small margin with the Catholic Church spending nearly **\$3.5million** to defeat it.

New Hampshire legislators will also be considering the issue in 2015, while New Jersey's Assembly passed their bill in November 2014 and look to the Senate to support it in 2015. However, Governor Chris Christie has promised to veto the bill. Pennsylvania, another jurisdiction that has attempted to achieve death with dignity policy reform in the past, will see legislators also grappling with the issue in 2015.

In early February a group of terminally ill patients and their doctors filed a lawsuit in New York demanding that the state make a declaration that doctor-assisted dying is legal in the state. A State Senator has promised to introduce a bill which, it is anticipated, will face difficulties. However, debates in New York will help galvanise the momentum across the east coast of the USA.

New York's Catholic Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan has vowed to 'aggressively oppose' any moves towards allowing assisted dying, stating:

*The real death with dignity - the real heroes are those who die naturally, who take each day at a time, savoring everything they've got. That is death with dignity.*

The Catholic Church has established a website to explain church teachings on the issue. This states on the home page:

*Euthanasia is an action or omission which of itself, or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering. It is therefore a rejection of God's gift of life.*

### **New Mexico**

Judges of the New Mexico Court of Appeals will decide whether medical practitioners can help terminally ill patients end their lives (United Press International 27/1/15). A case has been brought by Aja Riggs' who was diagnosed with uterine cancer in 2011. Laura Ives, Riggs' attorney, argued the right to die is protected in the constitution.

"It is this court's responsibility to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority," Ives said. The judges' decision could take six to 12 months.

#### References

Gambino, L 'New York Catholic archbishop vows to fight proposed assisted dying bill' 10th February 2015

Catholic Church website: 'Now and at the hour of our death- Catholic guidance for end of life decision making' <http://www.catholicendoflife.org/church-teaching/>

Media Health Leaders (online) 'New Mexico could be fifth state to legalise assisted-suicide' <http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/PHY-312608/NM-could-be-fifth-state-to-legalize-physicianassisted-suicide>

### **A note of thanks**

SAVES thanks a member, Trevor Herraman, for his kind assistance in carefully repairing the large display which was showing signs of wear. It is now sturdy once again – ready to much more easily erect at the next venue.

Thanks Trevor!

## **The World Federation of Right to Die Societies**

***The World Federation, founded in 1980, consists of 54 right to die organizations from 26 countries. The Federation provides an international link for organizations working to secure or protect the rights of individuals to self-determination at the end of their lives.***

**<http://www.worldrtd.net/>**



# End of Life Choice

Newsletter on current debates

## Yes! Christians DO support Voluntary Euthanasia!

Ian Wood\*

According to a 2012 Newspann poll, a substantial majority of Australians who identify as Christian support the right of doctors to provide a lethal dose. Included in this support are nearly nine out of 10 Anglicans and, perhaps more surprisingly, three out of four Catholics.

What we find is **a dichotomy between the views of many of the senior religious hierarchy and their flock** on the right of people to choose voluntary euthanasia or medically assisted dying when their life has become intolerable. However, in a very significant move, some prominent Anglicans have broken ranks.

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, one of the world's most eminent religious leaders, has made an extraordinary intervention in the debate over assisted death, by backing the right of the terminally ill to end their lives in dignity. He writes; "I have been fortunate to spend my life working for dignity for the living.

Now I wish to apply my mind to the issue of dignity for the dying. I revere the sanctity of life – but not at any cost."



Archbishop Desmond Tutu

**Lord George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury**, and head of the world wide Anglican church, speaking in support of the Falconer Assisted Dying Bill before the UK House of Lords in 2014, said: "it would not be "anti-Christian" to ensure that terminally ill patients avoid "unbearable" pain", and "One of the key themes of the gospels is love for our fellow human beings ... Today we face a terrible paradox. In strictly



Lord George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury

observing accepted teaching about the sanctity of life, the church could actually be sanctioning anguish and pain – the very opposite of the Christian message."

**Senior Anglican Canon Rosie Harper**, in a video interview, described the assisted death of her uncle with



Canon Rosie Harper

would have been terrible. He had no choice about dying. He did have choice about the manner of his death. That's all this bill is offering."

She argued that a God who offered "freedom of will" would not insist on "extreme suffering" at the end of life when there was a different, better way. Addressing the arguments, she continued, "First there is the contention that pain can always be controlled. We know that simply is not the case. Anyway - in what way is there value in a person being technically still alive if they are sedated to the point of oblivion? What this bill proposes is infinitely more honourable than what routinely happens now when a dying person is gradually and cruelly starved to death," concluded Canon Harper.

In another significant development, we find that religious opposition to proposed legislation in Australia has moved away from Biblical quotes, such as "Thou Shalt not Kill, or more accurately "not murder", as this is one of the easiest arguments to rebut, with many instances of killing - including genocide - reported in the Bible. Instead, religious opposition tends to misrepresent the true situation and the facts from Oregon, Belgium and other jurisdictions with legal assisted dying.

In 2014, the **Parliament in Quebec**, formerly the most Catholic province in Canada, passed an Act Respecting End-of-Life Care (Bill 52). The legislation establishes specific requirements for certain types of end-of-life care, namely terminal palliative sedation and medical aid in dying. The Quebec Parliament voted 94 to 22 to pass Bill 52, followed by a standing ovation. Surely a vote that politicians in South Australia could emulate?

Finally, I leave you with these photos of **Chantal Sebire**, before her illness and after, pleading for help to die after enduring years of suffering with an aggressive nasal cancer, that left her blind with her jaw disintegrating.



Chantal's story inspired me to become active in support of legalising assisted dying. It is my hope that Chantal will inspire South Australian MPs to pass legislation giving all South Australians a legal compassionate choice in dying.

\* Co-Founder, Christians Supporting Choice for VE

## Voluntary Euthanasia Support Groups

Several advocacy groups share the aim of law reform to allow choice for voluntary euthanasia under prescribed circumstances. These are listed below with contact details for members and other interested parties who may seek to join or make enquiries. **These groups all comprise volunteers and would be appreciative of any financial assistance.**

### ***Doctors for VE Choice:***

Website: [drs4vechoice.org](http://drs4vechoice.org)

#### **Dr. Rosemary A. Jones**

North Adelaide Medical Centre, Suite 22, 183 Tynte St North Adelaide, SA 5006.

Tel: (W) (61) (8) 8239 1988 Fax: (W) (61) (8) 8239 1085 Mobile: 0407 729 407

Email: [rosiej@internode.on.net](mailto:rosiej@internode.on.net)

#### **Professor John Willoughby**

Mobile 0499 078 938

[John.Willoughby@flinders.edu.au](mailto:John.Willoughby@flinders.edu.au)

### ***SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying***

Convenor: **Ms Susie Byrne** email: [sanursessupportingchoicesindying@hotmail.com](mailto:sanursessupportingchoicesindying@hotmail.com)

Facebook: SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying.

### ***Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia***

Website: [www.christiansforve.org.au](http://www.christiansforve.org.au)

National Co-ordinator:

#### **Ian Wood**

Villa 1, Hampton Mews, 4 Wills Place, Mittagong NSW 2575

Email: [Christiansforve@westnet.com.au](mailto:Christiansforve@westnet.com.au)

Patron and Member of the Executive:

**Rev Dr Craig de Vos**, Minister North Adelaide Baptist Church, 154 Tynte Street, North Adelaide SA 5006

Ph: (W) 08 8267-4971 (M) 0402 305 029

Email: [minister@nabc.org.au](mailto:minister@nabc.org.au), Website: [www.nabc.org.au](http://www.nabc.org.au)

### ***Syndicated Voluntary Euthanasia Youth Advocates – ‘SAVE-YA’***

Convenor: Ms Amy Orange: [SAVEyouthadvocates@hotmail.com](mailto:SAVEyouthadvocates@hotmail.com)

### ***Lawyers for Death with Dignity***

Spokesperson Stephen Kenny: [skenny@camattalempens.com.au](mailto:skenny@camattalempens.com.au) or Emma at [eriggs@cllegal.com.au](mailto:eriggs@cllegal.com.au) with *Lawyers for Death with Dignity* as the subject heading. <mailto:skenny@camattalempens.com.au>

### ***South Coast Support Group***

Convenors: Denis and Pat Haynes [den1929@bigpond.com](mailto:den1929@bigpond.com)

# NOTICE OF SAVES 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The SA Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES) will hold its 2015 AGM at **The Box Factory 59 Regent St South, Adelaide: Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 2.15 pm**  
Business will include the president's and treasurer's reports, and election of office bearers for a period of one year. Written nominations for official positions must be received by Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April.

Guest speaker will be **Dr Duncan McFetridge MP for Morphett**

Dr McFetridge will speak on his active support for legalising voluntary euthanasia.  
*Tea/coffee and biscuits will be available at the conclusion of the meetings. Bring your friends.*  
**All welcome!**

**Next public meeting will be held on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2015 at same time and venue**

## South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES)

**Annual Membership fees: Single \$30.00 (Concession \$15.00), Couple \$40.00 (Concession \$20.00)**

**Life membership: Single \$350.00, Couple \$450.00**

Annual fees fall due at the end of February. Payment for two or more years reduces handling and costs.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM – or you can join online at <http://www.saves.asn.au/samem.php>**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal ( ) New Member ( )

Surname(s) including Mr/Mrs/Ms etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Given name(s) or Initial(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ (is also used to provide additional information)

Year(s) of Birth (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque or money order payable to SAVES and send with this form to:

☐ **SAVES Membership Officer, PO Box 2151, Kent Town SA 5071**

Or pay by Electronic Funds Transfer:

☐ **Commonwealth Bank BSB 065 129 Account Number 00901742 - And please return completed form to the above postal address to ensure proper identification of your payment.**

Do you wish to receive the Bulletin (newsletter) as attachment in PDF format? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Your area of expertise that could be of help to SAVES \_\_\_\_\_

Membership fees for \_\_\_\_\_ years \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Plus donation to support the work of SAVES \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**SAVES members support the Society's primary objective which is a change in the law, so that in appropriate circumstances and with defined safeguards, death may be brought about as an option of last resort in medical practice. These circumstances include the free and informed request of the patient and the free exercise of professional medical judgement and conscience of the doctor.**

**SAVES IS NOT ABLE TO HELP PEOPLE END THEIR LIVES**  
(SAVES is not associated with Dr Philip Nitschke or EXIT International)

## SAVES' Primary Objective:

A change to the law in South Australia so that in appropriate circumstances, and with defined safeguards, death may be brought about as an option of last resort in medical practice. These circumstances include the free and informed request of the patient and the free exercise of professional medical judgment and conscience of the doctor.



### Committee:

#### President

Frances Coombe

#### Vice Presidents

Julia Anaf

Arnold Gillespie

Hon. Secretary /

Frances Greenwood

Hon. Treasurer

Vivienne Nielssen

Membership Officer

Elice Herraman

General Member

Anne Hirsch

#### Patrons

Emeritus Professor Graham Nerlich

Emeritus Professor John Willoughby

### Telephone

Frances Coombe **0421 305 684**

### Internet

**[www.saves.asn.au](http://www.saves.asn.au)**

**SAVES Bulletin** is published three times a year by the SA Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES). Letters, articles and other material for possible publication are welcome and should be sent to *SAVES Bulletin Editor, SAVES, PO Box 2151, Kent Town SA 5071.*

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**Editor: Julia Anaf**