



Press Release

Sandra Kanck's Courage Applauded

The decision by South Australian MLC Sandra Kanck to challenge the new Federal Suicide Related Materials Act was a courageous decision, said Exit Director Dr Philip Nitschke today.

Speaking from Darwin, Dr Nitschke said this legislation passed through federal parliament with the total support of the Howard government and the Beazley opposition.

Only the Democrats and the Greens had the conscience to oppose it.

The Suicide Related Materials Act came into effect on 6 January 2006. The Act makes it a crime for adults to discuss end of life issues on the telephone, fax, email or Internet.

“Many of our elderly members believe it is their right to obtain information about their end of life options” said Dr Nitschke. “This federal legislation denies this right. It makes criminals out of our elderly and people who are seriously ill and seeking an end to their suffering.”

Sandra Kanck sought information from Exit International about the strategies that people employ and plans to read this material in her speech in parliament. When the electronic version of Hansard is made available there will be a breach of federal law.

Dr Nitschke said that Exit receives a continuous flow of requests from the elderly and seriously ill people for information about their end of life options.

Many seek information on drugs they might obtain from their doctors, others want to know the ins and outs of traveling to Mexico where the best euthanasia drug (Nembutal) is freely available for purchase. Others want to know how they might use cylinders of disposable helium that can be purchased at any Spotlight store.

Providing accurate information is an essential strategy in harm reduction” said Dr Nitschke. “The federal legislation drives the flow of information underground and leads to the spread of misinformation. This causes greater suffering.”

Dr Nitschke will be in public gallery of the South Australian parliament on Wednesday to hear Ms Kanck's speech.

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