

ATHEIST FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

**PO BOX 21,
GUMERACHA SA 5233**

Ph: 8389 1021

Email: info@atheistfoundation.org.au

Web: <http://www.atheistfoundation.org.au>

re: inquiry into the provisions of the Criminal Code Amendment (Suicide Related Material Offences) Bill 2004.

26th March, 05

Dear Senators,

It is the staunch view of the Atheist Foundation of Australia that any proposal designed to censor information from the public has to meet very strict criteria. The evidence for taking such action must be more than only compelling, it must be sound, factual and with a basis in proper investigation. The motives must be transparent and not veiling other agendas. If the evidence is only anecdotal or similar then it should be seen as obvious that no such evidence exists.

If the required evidence does not exist, then neither does the reason for the proposed Bill.

Our investigations into the rationale behind the proposed Bill have failed to find the necessary evidence for its implementation.

On the contrary, the wording of the Proposed Bill is so loosely defined that it could be a hindrance to people in need of advice. This will not decrease the suicide rate but have a real tendency to create stress for so affected people. There is ample evidence that restricting knowledge causes uncertainty. The effect will be, in many cases, the precipitation of already anxious individuals into taking steps with no guarantee of the required results. Horrendous outcomes are not only possible but highly probable.

The Internet is a World-Wide-Web with its benefits of instantaneous and voluminous information sharing capacity not controllable by any one country. To attempt this action is not only futile in the long term, but will negatively affect non-targeted persons.

The AFA suspects that the proposed legislation is aimed at Voluntary Euthanasia organisations and Exit International because of ideological concerns. If this is the case the legislation is not only in error, but democratic process is being usurped.

In the strongest language possible the considered opinion of the Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc is that this proposed Bill and the 2 new clauses, 474.29A(3) and (4) should not be made into bad law.

Respectfully,

David Nicholls

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. B.', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

President
Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc.

Mobile 0408 344 633

