

6 November 2010

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

### Re: Legalisation of Active Euthanasia

This meeting, being the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Assembly of Baptist Churches of South Australia Inc, in response to the introduction into the SA Parliament of a Bill to legalise voluntary euthanasia and the Greens' Bill in Federal Parliament to overturn Commonwealth prohibitions against euthanasia legislation in the Territories –

1. Notes that recent reports of community support for euthanasia fail to adequately distinguish the deliberate killing of people from the morally acceptable practice of not prolonging life with burdensome treatment; and
2. Notes that when adequate palliative care, symptom control and psychosocial support is available and accessible, only a tiny minority of those accessing such support express a preference for euthanasia;
3. Observes that the outcome of legalised voluntary euthanasia will include the insertion of mistrust into patient-carer and patient-relative relationships, a creeping expansion of candidates for euthanasia, and reduced funding for terminal care;

Accordingly, this Assembly –

- a) Reaffirms that all human life is precious in God's sight, and that the Bible's clear prohibition of killing innocent humans has the positive effect of creating communities that love and care for others at their weakest and most vulnerable;
- b) Reiterates its opposition to voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide;
- c) Calls upon the Premier and the Prime Minister to oppose these initiatives;
- d) Calls on the SA State and Federal parliamentarians to request referral of these bills to parliamentary committees, and to inform themselves of the alternatives to euthanasia and of its consequences in jurisdictions that have adopted it; and
- e) Calls on these governments to continue to increase funding to pain management and palliative care services.

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### References

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Agnes van der Heide, M.D., Ph.D., et al: [End-of-Life Practices in the Netherlands under the Euthanasia Act](#); The New England Journal of Medicine, May 10, 2007.

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HM Chochinov, et al: [Desire for death in the terminally ill](#); American Journal of Psychiatry 152 (1995).

**Note:** This statement is based on the work of the Social Issues Executive, Sydney Anglican Diocese, 2010.