A SMALL STEP TOWARDS STATEHOOD

The Territory Opposition is calling on the Chief Minister to get over his fit of pique at not being forewarned of Bob Brown’s intention to introduce a Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2008 into Federal parliament and consider what would be the best outcome for the Territory.

“It appears that should Senator Brown’s Bill be passed by Federal Parliament it will return the right to make laws concerning voluntary euthanasia to the Territory Parliament," says Terry Mills, Opposition Leader.

“In other words Bob Brown is proposing to return power to make laws concerning voluntary euthanasia to the people of the Territory.

“I fail to see how increasing the sovereign powers of the people of the Territory is meddling in Territory affairs, as the Chief Minister has claimed.

“On the contrary, it would enhance the rights of Territorians by empowering the Territory Parliament to make laws about this important issue.

“Indeed, it’s possible to argue the move could be a small step on the road to Statehood; a cause the Chief Minister supports.

“Certainly when the Andrew’s Bill passed in 1998 it was roundly criticised for damaging the cause of Statehood for the Territory.

“Even though I personally oppose voluntary euthanasia, I want the decision as to whether it is legally available in the Territory to rest with the Territory Parliament.

“I think the first step should be to have a full appraisal of the legal impact of the Brown Bill undertaken by parliamentary counsel.

“Depending on the outcome of that appraisal the Territory Parliament could, in a bipartisan manner, campaign for cross-party Federal support for the Brown Bill.

“Although views about voluntary euthanasia will differ greatly, we should be able to agree about our right to decide for ourselves.”

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