

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER TO THE MEDIA

August 2000

The extraordinary and incredible plight of the HIV positive South African, EMILY MABOTE, essentially forced to remain a “prisoner” in the Alfred Hospital because she’s contracted a drug-resistant tuberculosis is surely not beyond a compassionate solution.

Just weeks after we’d been saturated by media coverage concerning the international AIDS conference in Durban, Emily came out here to see what support she could gather from among the Australian people to help her grassroots AIDS support program.

Those high hopes crashed when she came down with her tuberculosis here and then the news that her mother had had a stroke. She was finally hog-tied by her tuberculosis again as she couldn’t rush home (even empty handed) because of her contagious medical condition.....unless there was enough money to charter a passenger free plane or a berth on a slow boat to Africa.

We ourselves have petitioned Foreign Minister Alexander Downer (and Shadow Foreign Minister Laurie Brereton) to see if a RAAF flight might be an answer. That same military flight could also carry something tangible in the form of material aid for some of her positive people.

In recent times there’s been a lot of flights out of Australia to return home people who’ve come into this country illegally.

This is not the case with Emily and she needs to get home quickly.

We’re also trying to see if we may freshen up her hospital meals by taking in food that’s more familiar to her, and to bring her into our Rosehaven facility for a break from the hospital environment.

The Alfred’s in an awkward position too financially as Emily has no travel insurance. This is an opportunity for Health Minister Thwaites to make a special gesture too, so that Emily’s spared the additional pain and embarrassment of seeing others pay thousands of dollars keeping her in the Alfred, albeit that’s its for the protection of the rest of the community.

Let’s help Emily go home.

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