



Media Statement
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Nitschke Disappointed With Medical Council Decision

Australian voluntary euthanasia activist Dr Philip Nitschke is disappointed with the Medical Council of New Zealand's decision that it considered that he had been practising medicine when he presented workshops in New Zealand earlier this year.

In January 2006, Dr Nitschke presented a number of workshops to members of Exit International in New Zealand. These workshops, based on the book *Killing me Softly* of which he is the co-author with medical sociologist Dr Fiona Stewart, advocate the position that medicine, and doctors, should not have a role in making end of life decisions.

Dr Nitschke said today:

“I am disappointed with the Council's decision. It seems ironic that, in arguing that medical practitioners should not be involved in these decisions, the Medical Council considers that I am practising medicine. In fact, I have not practised medicine since the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act of the Northern Territory was overturned by the Australian Parliament in 1997.”

“However, I have been advised that there is no special legal significance in the Council's decision. The legislation in New Zealand means that it is for the Ministry of Health, and not the Medical Council, to decide whether I have practised medicine in New Zealand.”

“I am confident that I have not done so, even according to the Medical Council’s extremely wide definition. What I have done is to argue for a different approach to these issues. My seminars in New Zealand were political advocacy, not medical advice. I am hopeful that the Ministry of Health will agree with my view.”

Dr Nitschke is a registered medical practitioner in all states in Australia. He also has a doctorate in the physical sciences from Flinders University in Adelaide.

For further comment please contact:

Hayden Wilson, Kensington Swan +64 4 915 0782 or Philip Nitschke, Exit International +61 407 189 330