

e-Deliverance

A Peaceful Death is Everybody's Right

March

Exit International

2007

Peaceful Pill Handbook BANNED

In an extraordinary reversal of their December 2006 classification decision, the Office of Film and Literature Classification has now ruled to ban *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* from sale in Australia, effective immediately.

The Peaceful Pill Handbook was on bookstore shelves for only three weeks over the holiday period before the Australian Attorney General Philip Ruddock and Right to Life Australia moved to challenge the independent umpire's "Restricted Classification" decision which allowed the book to be sold in Australia under strict conditions (to people aged 18 years and over and with a warning on the front cover).

According to Exit Director Dr Philip Nitschke, the banning represents the biggest instance of political interference in a censorship decision in recent times.

"We submitted the book to the Office of Film and Literature Classification because it was the right thing to do. We were confident that *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* would be a valued source of factual information about end of life issues. As authors, we explicitly refrained from inciting or encouraging suicide or any type of criminal acts.



"For the OFLC to now ban the book on the grounds that we're "instructing" people in matters of crime is just ridiculous. Providing accurate information

is not encouragement, it is harm minimisation.

"Without access to accurate and concise information desperately ill people often resort to desperate measures. This is why hanging remains the leading cause of suicide in Australia.

The Peaceful Pill Handbook was published to confront this awful statistic by providing readers with information that would promote increased knowledge and informed decision-making. According to Dr Nitschke, the actions of Right to Life and the Attorney General make a mockery of the so-called independence of the OFLC. More than this, Australians should be outraged that a group of 7 unrepresentative individuals can alone decide what Australian adults should - and should not - be allowed to read.

The authors are currently in talks with their lawyers in Sydney deciding on whether future action in the Federal Court is warranted. The President of the NSW VE Society, Kep Enderby, is also acting in an advisory role in regard to the book's future. Watch the April edition of *Deliverance* for news on developments.

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Peaceful Pill Handbook Banned (cont)

Meanwhile the book is selling freely at the on-line bookstore <<Amazon.com>> and sections can be viewed on-line at Google Books To Exit's knowledge, everyone who has ordered the book from Amazon has had it delivered here in Australia. For supporters who do not have internet access, Exit suggests that these people may like to contact their local Chapter Coordinator who may be able to assist them with their order.

Because of the changes initiated by Justice Minister Senator Chris Ellison in 2001 to the Australian Customs Act - *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* is an illegal import and export.



Exit defence team: Dr Philip Nitschke, Ms Carol Berry (solicitor for the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) representing Exit, Mr Stephen Blanks (Australian Council of Civil Liberties) & Mr Simeon Beckett (barrister for the PIAC representing Exit)



Right to Life Australia's successful legal team of Mr Damien Tudehope & Mr Terry Tobin QC

The Handbook Ruffles a Few Feathers

In the period of review of the PPH many individuals and organisations saw fit to comment on and criticize the Handbook. It seems everyone with an axe to grind against Exit has weighed in. Groups united in their willingness to attack the book include:

- The Church
- The Medical Profession
- The Australian Federal Government
- Conservative elements in the VE movement

Congratulations to the Right to Life Association (NSW), for what has been a very encouraging win in having Philip Nitschke's book banned in Australia.
Australian Christian Lobby

For the record, I found the book to be poorly produced, factually incorrect, insulting to the medical profession and most disturbing.

Professor Janet Hardy - Palliative Care, Mater Hospital Brisbane

... publications which in fact outline how it should be done ... how you prepare various drugs for the purpose of assisting (suicide) ... you are inciting people to carry out a criminal act.

Phillip Ruddock - Attorney General, Australia

A handbook usually means a practical, "how to do it yourself" manual; which this book largely is not. While it does discuss a variety of suicide methods, it does so in rather technical detail. I, a biochemist for

ten years, would myself have a great deal of trouble successfully implementing many of them.

Neil Francis, President DWDV

You are shown over 14 pages how you might make it yourself, the chemical synthesis, the apparatus, the steps, etc. but the information is not at the level of a "recipe" or even "instructions".

Derek Humphry, ERGO

As Marshall Perron once said when you're copping flak - you are over the target. The Medical Profession and the Church condemn the book because it is far too specific and goes where no other self-help book has gone before. But does this explain comments from within the VE movement, where an adherence to the medical model of death and dying leads to a condemnation of innovation like that shown in the Peaceful Pill project?

On all these points, the Federal Government was clear. At the OFLC hearings, expert witnesses argued that the book is far too specific and the information it contains is too dangerous to allow ongoing publication in Australia. Being a trained biochemist is irrelevant. Rather what is needed, is a copy of *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* and a group of people prepared to learn - such as those who participated in the landmark first Peanut Project.

The book is now widely available and selling extremely well distributed Internationally by *Amazon.com* and *Google Books*

Exit New Zealand Program

In early February, Exit travelled to New Zealand to launch *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* in Auckland and to hold workshops in both Auckland and Wellington.



VESNZ Society President Mr Jack Jones with Dr Philip Nitschke, Mr Lindsay Perigo and an Exit Supporter

On Sunday 11 February, well known New Zealand broadcaster and the editor of *Free Radical* magazine, Lindsay Perigo, launched *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* in Auckland. In front of a crowd of around 70, Perigo, a free speech advocate, gave a rousing talk on the importance of free speech and its relevance in end of life issues. Wearing a tshirt emblazoned with the motto "Live Free or Die" Perigo warmly advocated *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* to all those who want to know more about their end of life options, while urging politicians and members of the Religious Right to stay out of the lives of those who do not share their beliefs. The book launch was hosted by New Zealand Voluntary Euthanasia Society President Mr Jack Jones and was well attended by NZ media.

In Wellington Exit Director Philip Nitschke met with the NZ Chief Censor Bill Hastings, to discuss the book's possible censorship in New Zealand. In a cordial meeting, the Chief Censor made it clear that he was well aware of the furore across the Tasman that was accompanying the Australian Attorney General's actions in appealing the Censorship



Enjoying the Auckland Exit Chapter lunch

Board's decision, but stressed that NZ was a different country.

The NZ Office of Film and Literature Classification has sought submissions on the PPHB. The NZVES has provided written submission and this may go some way towards countering possible hostile material from medical and church groups that may oppose the book's NZ distribution. A decision is expected shortly.

Booked out workshops were run in both Auckland and Wellington, and attended by members of Exit and members of the VE Society of New Zealand. As part of the revamped 2007 workshop series, both New Zealand workshops focused upon the issues of practical significance and of most interest to the participants. These included the use of Helium and Exit Bags, jet flow control, overseas options such as Dignitas and the availability of Nembutal from other countries.



The NZ Chief Censor, Bill Hastings inspects a copy of the PPHB with author Dr Philip Nitschke

The Auckland and Wellington workshops were filmed as part of a TV documentary being produced by Andrew Merrifield. Permission from all participants for filming was sought in the weeks leading up to the workshops. A screening date for the documentary will be announced in a future edition of *Deliverance*.

Exit would like to thank Heather Westerkamp and Mabel Smith in Auckland and Bev Hurrelle and Jean Cartmell in Wellington for their assistance with the venues, catering and organisation for the book launch and the Exit workshops. We would also like to thank all those supporters who agreed to be filmed and interviewed by the Merrifield team. The next Exit visit to NZ - specifically to establish a branch of the successful "Exit Friends" support network - is scheduled for the second half of 2007.

Further Developments in Mexico

In February, Exit took the opportunity to undertake new field research concerning the availability of Nembutal in Mexico. On this trip we extended our survey away from the border cities and looked in detail at Mexico City.

What we found in the capital was a situation similar to that which exists elsewhere in Mexico. Veterinary Nembutal is freely available for sale and we can categorically contradict the stream of stories from North America suggesting that the supply of Nembutal has dried up.



Nembutal purchased in Mexico City this month

Exit purchased a number of bottles of the drug from several locations during the period spent in Mexico. The prices ranged from US\$16 to US\$25. Nowhere was there profiteering, and nowhere was specific documentation required.

Exit Workshops are Changing

Exit has been working on the formation of a new workshop structure for some time. This new format will be unveiled at the first workshop for 2007 in Melbourne. The new workshops will cover a full day - but the content will be split. Theoretical aspects, such as the recent information about overseas Nembutal will be presented in the morning, a bring-a-plate social lunch will then be held. After lunch those who wish can return to participate in some practical projects. The process of stabilising Nembutal to give it an indefinite shelf life will be demonstrated, as will the construction of gas flow control jets for use with helium.

The entire program is free to Exit Supporters. Places will be offered on a first-come first-served basis.

NOTE: The Melbourne workshop on March 31 will form part of a documentary being produced for the ABC, examining changes in thinking on



Mexico City Retail Outlet

Exit also took the opportunity to carry out a series of laboratory experiments aimed at altering the acquired Nembutal to produce a solid form of the drug with an indefinite shelf life. Detailed information on this process is included in the new (2007) round of Exit workshops, and will be included in the next edition of *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* due out in July.



Crystals derived from purchased Nembutal

VE amongst elderly Australians. Those who wish to attend but not be part of the documentary will be catered for.

Information workshops will run for 2.5 hours in the morning, followed by one hour lunch, and a further 2.5 hour Nembutal & Helium workshop in the afternoon. Participants are welcome to come to all three events on the same day or to any one that they wish. Unlike in past years, invitations will be mailed to all Exit supporters in each of the states where a workshop is to be held.

2007 Workshop Dates

Melbourne - Sat 31 March
Brisbane - Tuesday 24 April
Sydney - Friday 27 April
Adelaide - Tuesday 1 May

Workshops in Perth and the regional centres will follow in the second half of 2007.

Last Chance to Join the Day of Shame Freedom Ride

A handful of seats remain on the buses that will form the Remembering ROTI Freedom Ride from Sydney to Canberra later this month (25-27 March).

As we go to press, the itinerary has been finalised. Program highlights now include: the presentation of the Condolence Book messages to Senators Bob Brown (Greens) and Lyn Allison (Australian Democrats) and others to be confirmed, a ceremonial *Peaceful Pill Handbook* book-burning, speeches in the park by prominent VE activists, the opportunity to attend question time in the House of Representatives and even the option of making song in Parliament House itself. This is in addition to the Memorial Dinner with the ABC's Phillip Adams at the National Museum.

Upon arrival at the Canberra Rex Hotel on Sunday 25 March, a two hour briefing session will be held between 5.30 and 7.30pm.

All participants are encouraged to attend in order to find out the finer details of plans for our 2 day spectacular. The briefing will be followed by a buffet dinner at the hotel - everyone is welcome.

As a final note, Exit is extremely excited to have the ABC coming with us on the buses from Sydney and filming the Day of Shame activities in Canberra. We would ask that Exit members prepared to be interviewed please make themselves known to Kerri Dennis at registration. This will assist us to work with the ABC in their coverage of this historic event.

If you haven't yet registered or would like to invite a friend, please call the Exit office on 1300 10 EXIT (3948) to organise. At the time of press around 5 places are still available on the buses.

Sydney Exit Members Face Murder Charges

In a devastating move, New South Wales police have charged Exit members Caren Jennings and Shirley Justins over the March 2006 death of Shirley's partner of 20 years Graeme Wylie. This has come as terrible news to the Sydney Exit community.

As we go to press, Caren and Shirley have obtained bail after spending close to a week at Silverwater Women's Prison in Sydney's outer west. They will return to court in early May to fiercely contest the charges. Bail conditions were strict and require that Caren takes no part in Exit activities, frustrating her plans to participate in the National Day of Shame.

Changes to the Email Deliverance News Service

Exit is redesigning the DNS. Changes are needed, to address misinformation about Exit and our activities. Exit News & Forum will be launched as soon as the final technical issues are resolved. It will be free to all and will have International and Australian & NZ sections, as well as a forum where people can lodge their questions and comments and receive feedback from others on the list. To be part of this service you will need to respond to the introductory email that will be sent out to our 3000+ email addresses in the coming weeks.

Exit will continue to publicly support Caren who has been an invaluable support at Sydney workshops for many years. Exit plans to establish a fighting fund to help Caren Jennings pay her legal costs which could be as high as \$30,000. The fund will be launched at the Memorial Dinner at the National in Canberra on 26 March.

Dr Philip Nitschke, will continue to comment on the case in the media, ensuring that the proceedings are recognised for what they have become - a politically-motivated vendetta against an elderly, terminally ill woman who believes staunchly in a person's right to choose.



Caren Jennings

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Donate to Exit

Exit relies on donations to fund its workshop,
private visits and R&D programs
Bequest forms can be obtained from Exit.



Donate to Exit

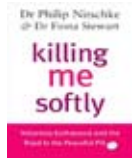
WBC	R	
WBC-G	KMS	
B	DVD	
C	OTHER	

Office Use Only

I want to donate (join/rejoin) to Exit (A\$100-150 is the average annual donation)

Exit Books/ DVDs

- * **Killing Me Softly VE and the Road to the Peaceful Pill** A\$37
 (by Drs Philip Nitschke & Fiona Stewart, 2005) (includes postage within Australia)
 (Also available at Exit's on-line store at Exitinternational.net)



- * **Mademoiselle & the Doctor (DVD)** A\$55
 (Director's Cut - 90 minutes) (includes postage within Australia)
 (Also available at Exit's on-line store at Exitinternational.net)



- * **The Peaceful Pill Handbook** (International edition)
 (Due to the banning of the PPH, the book is now only available at the on-line bookstore www.Amazon.com)



Contact Details

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