

e-Deliverance

A Peaceful Death is Everybody's Right

February

Exit International

2008

New Zealand Customs Seize Revised Peaceful Pill Handbook

On arrival at Auckland International Airport on Thursday 31 January, Exit Director Philip Nitschke found himself detained for over 2.5 hours as officials seized his belongings including the new revised NZ edition of the *Peaceful Pill Handbook*.

Visiting New Zealand as part of Exit's 2008 Public Meeting and Workshop series, Dr Nitschke had brought two wholly revised copies of the Handbook to submit to the office of the Chief Censor in Wellington. The new copies differ from the version that was banned in June 2007 by having entire sections blacked out.



Philip with VES NZ President Jack Jones with the blacked out Peaceful Pill Handbook

In contrast to the Australian blanket ban of the book, the NZ Censor was very specific in his ruling. This meant that Exit was able to remove so-called "objectionable" sections of the book, allowing for the publication to be resubmitted for classification. Copies of the book are now with Exit's lawyers in Wellington. Since the seizure Chief Censor, Bill Hastings, has stated publicly that possession of an amended book is not illegal.

The Customs service has also announced that it will be forwarding the seized copies on to Mr Hastings's office. Exit now awaits a second classification decision.
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'DIY with Betty' YouTube.com Video Heralds Future

In the weeks since Exit posted our most recent video on the Internet - *Do it Yourself with Betty* - the short, 3-minute clip has rocketed up the YouTube ratings attracting over 50 views every day.

Filmed in Melbourne with retired nurse educator, Betty Peters, the video provides a step-by-step guide to making an Exit Bag. While the Exit Bag technique is not for every

Betty Cooks with Sodium and *Betty makes Super Dry Alcohol* - both of which describe essential steps in the Peaceful Pill project.



These three videos are amongst more than 50 included in the forthcoming digital edition of the *Peaceful Pill Handbook* (out May).

Betty can be viewed at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18-mzj_DVOI



one the method (when combined with helium) does offer a reliable and peaceful end-of-life choice. Following the success of *DIY with Betty*, Exit has begun filming two new clips titled:

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Exit's Philosophy to Voluntary Euthanasia or 'Why we Do what we Do?'

Our Rationale

Exit was founded by Dr Philip Nitschke in 1997 after the overturning of the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act. In the years since, Philip has found that he has been approached by an increasing number of the well elderly seeking information. These people are not ill. Rather, they wish to be prepared for the what may lay around the corner. Most accept that with old age comes uncertainty in health and with that uncertainty comes worry and anxiety. Knowing one's options seems a common-sense way to prepare for the future.

Initially known as the Voluntary Euthanasia Research Foundation, Exit has always had as its focus on the provision of practical information to elderly Australians and to people who are seriously ill.

Over the past decade, this outcomes-based focus has set Exit apart from all other voluntary euthanasia organisations. Because of this focus (or perhaps in spite of it), Exit is now the largest organisation of its kind nationally with over 3000 members in Australia and overseas, and a sizeable annual budget.

Recent Developments

In recent years Exit has experienced considerable setbacks, largely as the result of specific legislative reforms brought about by the former Howard government. Not content with overturning the Northern Territory ROTI Act, the Federal government went on to amend the Customs Act, introduce the Suicide Related Material Offences Act and initiate the selective and highly political use of the Film & Literature Classification Act.

What each of these moves has in common is a restriction on the flow of information. Over the past 10 years, the Federal government has set out to systematically deny information on end of life choices to those who seek it.

To work within this new legislative framework, Exit has needed to be innovative and persistent. We have welcomed the support of Neal Nicol, head of the US company of the same name, Exit International US Ltd.

If it weren't for Neal's commitment to free speech, the *Peaceful Pill Handbook* would no longer be available. As things stand the book is sold online by Neal and it is Neal's company that keeps Amazon.com in stock. In these important ways, elderly and seriously ill Australians can still obtain the information denied to them by the government.

The Future of Free Speech

The advent of the Internet has revolutionised the way we live. Just like the printing press before it, the Internet has democratised all forms of expression and communication. No longer is one dependent upon social connections or qualifications, today information is everywhere and for a large part it is accessible to everyone who seeks to know.

Where end of life information is concerned, it is only logical that groups such as Exit will seek to exploit the opportunities offered by the net. In this new multimedia age, this means that information will take many forms beyond the written word. And it is the Internet that allows this enhancement with images and pictures, voices and sound.

For these reasons, Exit is soon to launch a digital version of the *Peaceful Pill Handbook*. Neither a book nor a workshop, but somewhere in between, Exit hopes to deliver - in real time - this valuable and much sought after information to those who seek it. Yet already there are voices of dissent, suggesting this approach is a dangerous one and that the vulnerable could be harmed.

Academic studies of the relationship between knowledge, attitudes and health practices suggest a link that is tenuous at best. Exit believes Internet publication offers little risk to vulnerable individuals. In this, we are happy to be guided by Derek Humphry. When his critics screamed "stop" when he published *Final Exit* some 16 years ago, arguing that such easy-to-access information would lead to a rise in suicide rates, Derek stood his ground as his naysayers were proven wrong. History will be similar for Exit. Yes, Virginia, the Internet really does change everything, most often for the better.

Public Meetings & Workshops 2008

With the new year has come increased demand for Exit's new format public meetings plus workshops. The success of January's meetings at Hervey Bay, Bribie Island and the Gold Coast has now led to an expansion of Exit's regional program of events to include even more national events.

According to Exit Director Philip Nitschke, the popularity of the meetings is in part due to the absence of other sources of end of life information. "For a long time at Exit we have advocated the importance of older people's access to accurate and reliable end-of-life information. And for a long time we have tried to balance a long-term VE law reform agenda with people's more immediate and pressing concerns and needs. We are pleased to note the marked increase in public interest in Exit which is now resulting in more people coming along to these meetings. This strength of numbers is welcome and contributes towards creating a political force for change.

Exit's Public Meeting and Workshop schedule is now available on the Exit website. Included in this newsletter is the program as it currently stands. Members should always consult the website or call the Exit office in case of last minute changes. All members will be mailed notification of meetings in their local areas.

February

Auckland (Ferndale House 9am)
Wellington (St Johns in City 9am)
Nelson (Melrose House 10am)
Christchurch (YMCA Hall 1pm)

March

Melbourne - Tuesday 11 March
(Templestowe Snr Citizens Hall 2pm)
Bendigo - Thursday 13 March
(Bendigo Bank Theatre 2pm)
Launceston - Saturday 15 March
(Launceston Library, city 10am)
Hobart - Tuesday 18 March
(Glenorchy Library 9.30am)

April

Dorrig - Mon 3 March (CWA Hall 10am)
Newcastle - Wednesday 5 March
(Trades Hall, 10am)
Adelaide - Monday 14 April
(Fullarton Centre 2.30pm)
Victor Harbour - Wednesday 16 April
(VH Community Recreation Ctr 10am)
Sydney - Wednesday 23 April
(Dougherty Community Centre 10am)

May

Brisbane - Mon 19 May (Venue tbc)
Gold Coast - Tues 20 May (Venue tbc)
Darwin - Sat 31 May (Palm City 1pm)

July

Melbourne - Monday 14 July
(Templestowe Memorial Hall 10am)

Warrnambool Wed 16 July
(Archie Graham Centre 10am)

September

Cairns - Thursday 18 Sept (Venue tbc)
Sunshine Coast - Tues 23 Sept (Venue tbc)
Gold Coast - Thurs 25 Sept (Venue tbc)
Toowoomba - Sat 27 Sept (Venue tbc)
Lismore - Tuesday 30 Sept
(Lismore Workers Club 2 - 5pm)

October - London

November

Sydney - Wednesday 5 November
(Dougherty Community Centre 10am)
Canberra - Fri 7 Nov (Griffin Centre 2pm)
Albury - Mon 10 Nov
(Council Chambers 9.30am)
Melbourne Thurs 13 Nov
(Bulleen/Templestowe Snr Citizens Ctr 2pm)
Geelong Saturday 15 November
(Geelong West Town Hall 2pm)

December

Perth, Bunbury, Geraldton (Venue tbc)
Adelaide (Venue tbc)

Contact Us

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Donate to Exit

Exit relies on donations to fund its meetings/
workshops, private visits and R&D programs
Please give generously.

2008 Nancy's Friends Training

The first of two Nancy's Friends training weekends for 2008 will be held in Newcastle on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 April. Since the Nancy's Friends network was launched in 2005 over 100 Exit members have been assisted. Sometimes this assistance has simply meant providing a shoulder to lean on. At other times a close on-going relationship has resulted.

Nancy's Friends was established to ensure that everyone who seeks it has support and company as they make their important end of life decisions. The Nancy's Friends network also acts as a valuable source of practical information for people considering their options, and can act as a stop gap for people waiting on a private clinic visit with Dr Nitschke.



Nancy Crick

Nancy's Friends was created in memory of Gold Coast Exit member Nancy Crick and based on Nancy's own edict, that no one should have to die alone and no one should feel alone in dying. National NF Coordinator, Lindy Boyd, says that Nancy's Friends has become an invaluable service that has helped relieve worry and anxiety and provided comfort and reassurance to a large

number of Australians nearing the end of their days. The two-day training program focuses on a number of important end of life issues. These include the law and the legal boundaries of providing assistance, strategies for working with families and friends of the person in need, and the practical end of life issues that are often of great concern to the dying. The training makes extensive use of role plays to illustrate the myriad issues arising from working with people who are seriously ill and often desperately in need.

While no specific qualifications are required, participants must be committed to the principles of Exit and voluntary euthanasia and prepared to make an on-going commitment to the Network. Participants are also asked to self-fund attendance at the course (transport & accommodation), although Exit covers the cost of the training. A highlight of the course will be the Friday night dinner (as a guest of Exit). If you are interested in finding out more about Nancy's Friends please contact Lindy Boyd on 1300 NANCYS (62 62 97) or at the Melbourne Exit office on 03 9850 8192.

Exit Chapters in 2008

In 2008, the activities of Exit chapters will be supplemented by 'Exit Socials' - social and fun occasions where members can meet each other and mingle casually with Philip Nitschke and other Exit staff and volunteers. Exit Socials will initially be held in Sydney and Melbourne, expanding to other cities where practicable. Watch future editions of *Deliverance* for details. The year ahead for Exit Chapters will be full of energy and activity. For details about the next Chapter meeting in your local area please contact your local person and come along.

Australia

Adelaide - Julia Harrison (08-8390-1822) & Janine Gebert (08-8431-1668)
Albury - Pat Zehntner (02-6026-8439)
Bribie Island - Mark Cozens (07-3408-1325)
Brisbane - Angelika Minner (0431-275-840)
Canberra - David Swanton (0401-315-631) & Tony Whelan (02-6223-5078)
Darwin - Amanda McClure (0413-402-460)

Dorrigo - Al Hartley (02-6657-2355)
Cairns - Ian Byford (07-4039-0018) & John Palm (0427-486-402)
Forster - Lesley Archer (02-6554-5942)
Gold Coast - Elaine Arch-Rowe (0421796713)
Hervey Bay - Paul Scott (0408-892-195)
Hobart - Keith Anderson (03-6229-2447)
Newcastle - Vince Phelan (0405-344-740)
New Zealand - Jean Cartmell (04-971-6946)
Nth Rivers - Jude McCauley (02-6672-3321)
Melbourne - Rob Cane (0423-305-788)
Morn Peninsula - Pat Scrivenor (03-59741580)
Perth - Carol O'Neil (0429-039-167)
Sunshine Coast - Bron Norman (0418-456-507)
Sydney - Madeleine Tilche (0432-611-695)
Townsville - Eric & Syd Collins (07-4729-0275)

New Zealand

Auckland - Philippa Malpas (09-817-6646)
Christchurch - Jean Cartmell (04-971-6946)
Dunedin - Paula Westoby (03-471-9955)
Nelson - Jan Rosie (03-545-9931)
Wellington - Judy & Noel (contact to follow)

Exit Opens New Chapters at Bribie Island & Northern Rivers

Following the success of January's meetings in Queensland, Exit is delighted to announce the establishment of two new local Chapters. Firstly we'd like to welcome Mark Cozens (with helpers Geoff and Kay) to the Bribie Island Chapter.

We also welcome Jude McCauley to Exit and her new Northern Rivers Chapter. We encourage Exit members to make contact with Mark and Jude as both will be holding their inaugural meetings in the very near future. (See page 4 for contact details)

Exit Director to Attend Laboratory Training Course

Exit Director, Philip Nitschke, is scheduled to attend a specialist training course on the latest developments of the Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectroscopy research industry in March.

Exit will have the new GC/MS equipment up and running in the near future and the new company managing the equipment-NorthernAnalytic-will begin work testing and refining methodologies.

For details contact:

northernanalytic@bigpond.com

Forthcoming Chapter Meetings

The next **Perth** Chapter Meeting will be held on Monday 11 February.

The next **Canberra** Chapter Meeting will be held on Friday 15 February.

The next **Melbourne** Chapter Meeting will be held on Tuesday 26 February.

The next **Sydney** Chapter Meeting will be held on Friday 14 March.

For details contact your local chapter coordinator.

New Zealand Customs Seize Book

On a more positive note, Exit is delighted to announce that new Exit chapters have been formed in Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. Full contact details and meeting dates will be published in the March edition of *Deliverance*.

To all in the Exit community, welcome to 2008.

This year Exit has grand plans. Not only have we scheduled an intensive year-long Public Meeting and Workshop program but in between these travels I have committed to ensuring that our newly acquired Laboratory Equipment will be up and running; allowing Exit to continue providing the most practical means of assistance for those seeking accuracy and reliability in their end of life choices.

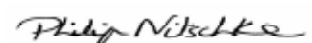
One of the most important drivers in getting the analytic laboratory fully functioning is the pressing need of several Exit groups to have the means to test the results of their endeavours. Surety and peace of mind have long been the goal of Exit's Research and Development program: the fully-functioning analytic laboratory will ensure this.

On the publishing front, 2008 will see a new digital edition of the *Peaceful Pill Handbook*. With the printed version banned, the Internet represents one of the few avenues open for Australians to access end of life information. Supplementing the digital version will be a series of video clips, parts of which will continue to be made available on *YouTube.com* to stimulate discussion and debate. The new digital edition will be published by Exit US.

Finally, as this newsletter goes to press two significant events have been reported in the media. Firstly I am in New Zealand having just completed a four city tour. This visit has been more controversial than in the past and not only because of the seizure of the new NZ version of the *Handbook* by Customs.

This visit has also seen front page coverage of the death of a well Exit member some two years ago. Anne (from Wellington) was a life member of Exit. Her decision to end her life (using Nembutal) while well has caused outrage in this country, in much the way as the actions of Lisette Nigot in Australia some five years ago. And like Lisette, I will not condemn Anne's actions. Dignity in passing was her right and while we might not agree with the timing of her decision we can all agree she had the right to make a decision of this nature.

The final issue of importance this week is Senator Bob Brown's announcement of a new Private Member's Bill. Exit welcomes this Bill as the word in legal circles is that, if successful, the NT Rights of the Terminally Ill Act would be immediately re-instated. This would place Australia back in a respectable position in the area of end-of-life rights. However, the passage of this Bill through Federal Parliament will be very difficult.



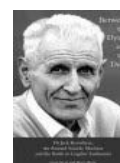
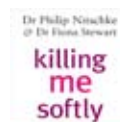


Donate to Exit

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

- * **Killing Me Softly VE and the Road to the Peaceful Pill** ☐ A\$37
(by Drs Philip Nitschke & Fiona Stewart) (includes postage within Australia)
- * **Between the Dying & the Dead - Dr Jack Kevorkian, the Assisted Suicide Machine & the Battle to Legalise Euthanasia** ☐ A\$37
(by Neal Nicol & Harry Wylie) (includes postage within Australia)
- * **I Bequeath the Python** ☐ A\$15
(by Elaine Arch-Rowe & Gordon Bell) (includes postage within Australia)
- * **Menzies Election Rosettes** ☐ A\$15
(“Choice: Philip Nitschke” - purple & white) (includes postage within Australia)
- * **Exit T shirts** ☐ A\$25
(“My Life My Choice” Sm, Med, Large, XL, XXL) (includes postage within Australia)
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Contact Details

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