After many months in development, Exit was pleased in early May to launch the prototype of the Nembutal Home Test Kit during Exit’s May trip to the UK for a series of public meetings and workshops. This new development was reviewed in the April 13 edition of TIME Magazine ‘Foolproofing Suicide with Euthanasia Test Kits’ www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1890413,00.html

This development was prompted by an increasing number of Exit members successfully obtaining Nembutal over the past 18 months. This in turn has led to a demand for the development of the Kit. In particular, the supply of mailorder Nembutal from Mexico (as detailed in the February update of the Peaceful Pill eHandbook) operated effectively for several months, providing people around the world with peace of mind. However many recipients have been concerned about whether the substance they obtained is in fact pentobarbital sodium and at what concentration. The Kit is designed to answer these two questions.

The Kit consists of three reagents and three small (0.5ml) diabetic hypodermic syringes. A tiny sample (0.1ml) of the liquid veterinary Nembutal is taken from the bottle without breaking the sterile seal. This is then added to one of the provided reagents then the second reagent (from a preloaded syringe added to the reaction chamber). If the substance being tested is the soluble sodium Nembutal salt, a bright blue colour change is noted immediately.

To test the concentration, the contents of a third preloaded syringe is added to this blue solution. If the blue colour remains, one can have confidence that if the full 100ml of the liquid is consumed, a peaceful death will result. However, if the colour disappears, one needs to exercise caution as the tested sample may be too weak to be effective. To remove the subjective nature of interpreting this result, future kits will come with a ‘reader’ that will give a yes/no answer (e.g. a red or green indicating light).

A series of short films demonstrating the use of the Test Kit has been included in the May update to the Peaceful Pill eHandbook.

While the Kit is not yet on the market, in Laboratory testing, the prototype Kits have showed consistently accurate results. It is expected that the Kit will be on sale by the end of 2009.

Note I - The Kit will have a limited shelf life of several months. The Kit will retail for US$50 and be available from www.peacefulpill.com

Note II - The Nembutal Test Kit is not, as has been occasionally reported in the media, a Suicide Kit. The Kit is designed solely for the purpose of testing liquid, veterinary Nembutal.
UK Workshops Attract Record Crowds

Report from Bournemouth

Exit’s first UK tour for 2009 began amidst a flurry of activity at Bournemouth’s Hamilton Hall hotel. Despite intense media scrutiny, a very successful public meeting and workshop were held with around 50 participants. The public meeting took the familiar format of a discussion about law reform and current practical (legal) options. The public meeting was open to the media who at times made the situation challenging indeed. Exit is grateful to the forbearance of those who attended amidst the journalistic fervour.

At the closed workshop Exit was heartened to be able to provide much-sought after answers to questions about a variety of end of life strategies. Exit is particularly grateful to host John Bellamy for his courage in hosting the meeting and to those new members who spoke to the media regarding why they attended the meeting and why it makes good sense to make an end of life plan, just in case their health should ever deteriorate. Exit looks forward to returning to Hamilton Hall in 2010.

News clips/articles of the meeting can be viewed at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8034265.stm
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8033877.stm

Report from Brighton

The Brighton public meeting was held on Wednesday 6 May at the Brighthelm Community Centre in Brighton on England’s south coast. Our host was Reverend David Coleman to whom Exit is most grateful for his open mind and commitment to free speech.

The decision to hold the meeting at a church venue, however, led to a significant compromise of Exit’s behalf with the cancellation of the ExiTutorial workshop. Nevertheless, the public meeting went ahead and was attended by around 80 people from all sides of the debate.

Also in attendance on this day were a news crew from ABC TV in New York who filmed the meeting, speaking with many of those who attended about the pros and cons of Assisted Suicide - Voluntary Euthanasia. The story that ran was titled: ‘Dr Death Breaks Down Techniques for Suicide’. Exit would like to thank Reverend Coleman for his hospitality on the day and for his support with enquiries from the Home Office.

Report from Stroud

On Friday 8 May Exit held what proved to be the largest meeting of the UK tour with over 100 people coming from far and wide to attend the Stroud (Gloucestershire) meeting and workshop. Held in a wonderful local community venue known as ‘The Space’ and supported by a bevy of local volunteers, the Stroud meeting was a resounding success with one elderly participant echoing the sentiments of many as he left after the workshop. ‘You know I’ve waited 20 years for this information’ he said as he thanked the organisers.

Despite a prayer vigil being held in the church grounds adjacent to the meeting, the overwhelming majority of participants were grateful for an opportunity to hear new ideas. Others were simply relieved to meet others of like mind. Exit is extremely grateful to local organiser David Michael for all his work in organising the UK tour.
VE Society of UK Calls for Dr Nitschke’s Deportation

In an unprecedented move, the VE Society of the UK used the opportunity of Exit’s May visit, not only to call for police action to close the public meetings and workshops but Jo Cartwright (Dying in Dignity) issued a statement encouraging the Home Office to deport Drs Philip Nitschke and Fiona Stewart from Britain altogether.

When asked about her Society’s reaction to Dr Nitschke being allowed to hold his meetings in the UK, Ms Cartwright told the Daily Mail: ‘What he is doing is irresponsible and unlawful and we had hoped that he would be deported.’

In light of her comments, Dr Nitschke said that divisions within the global right to die movement look set to deepen which is ‘very disappointing.’ ‘On the one hand there are organisations which believe (in the absence of a law) that the provision of end of life information to rational/seriously ill adults is somehow dangerous.

On the other hand, there are groups such as Exit which believe that access to accurate, end of life information enables rational adults to make informed decisions about their own lives and deaths.

Speaking from Sydney, Dr Nitschke continued: ‘I look forward to the day when this controversy is an artifact of a bygone era and this level of hostility dissipates.’

Exit Book Club Launches in Melbourne & Sydney

The Exit Book Club got off to a wonderful start in Melbourne and Sydney in recent weeks with award-winning author (and Exit member) Andrea Goldsmith reading from her new novel, Reunion.

Fresh from the Sydney Writers Festival where she spoke to full houses, Andrea wowed the Exit audiences discussing themes of the book and the background of how she came to write a Euthanasia-themed novel. Reunion is available from bookshops in Australia and online from Melbourne’s iconic bookstore - www.readings.com.au (international orders accepted).

The bag is in her hands, she shoves it in the drawer, she grabs the note and shoves that in the drawer too.

No one must know, no one must suspect. She drags herself to her feet, she drags herself down the stairs, she drags herself across the courtyard to the house. She staggers past the couch, she staggers past Harry’s room, at last she reaches her own bedroom.

And even as she is falling asleep she is furious at being reduced to a plastic bag over her head, furious at her failure to bring it off, furious at having to cover her tracks.

There’s no privacy when you’re ill. And there’s no bloody justice.

Peaceful Pill eHandbook May 2009 Update

In May, Exit International US Ltd released another new update to the video (online) edition of the Peaceful Pill eHandbook. Topics include:

- The Nembutal Test Kit
- More changes in OS sources of Nembutal
- New section on Nitrogen & Inert Gases

The video Peaceful Pill eHandbook is published by Exit International US Ltd and available at www.peacefulpill.com. Purchase price is US$75 (includes 24 months of updates). Those who have already purchased the print edition of The Peaceful Pill Handbook can email Exit for an AUD$25 cash-back if the online edition is also purchased.

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Clean Feed Update

the Future of Mandatory Internet Filtering

In a thought-provoking opinion editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 May, columnist Michael Duffy noted the importance of the Letter ‘P’, pointing out a family of websites beginning with the 16th letter of the alphabet. Websites featured by Duffy include:

- www.panty-ass.com
- www.peacefulpillhandbook.com
- www.pickyourperversion.com

Ok you say, but what do these sites have in common? Apart from their defining letter, each website has been identified and included on the Australian Government’s blacklist of soon-to-be banned websites. Known as the ‘Clean Feed’, the Government’s mandatory Internet ban initiative is being spearheaded by Communications Minister, Senator Stephen Conroy. The scheme is intended to fulfil the Rudd Labor Government’s election promise to the Australian Christian Lobby.

In mid May, Exit embarked on an ambitious 10 day trip up the east coast of Australia holding meetings in Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. With around 1000 people attending these meetings, they were an unqualified success. Such success, however, did not come easy. In Mackay, the 5th West Mackay Neighbourhood Centre (which was long booked) cancelled Exit’s booking at the last minute. According to the *Daily Mercury* newspaper, the Centre’s events’ officer, Naomi Anderson, ‘disagreed 180% with what he [Philip Nitschke] is doing.’ She, therefore, quite arbitrarily decided to cancel the booking.

In Cairns, the City Library (a venue used previously by Exit) also issued a last minute cancellation, allegedly because security would need to be called. Exit did, indeed, call security on the occasion of its last meeting in May 2005, but not because of any disturbance. Rather, there was a power failure and the phone number of security was the only after-hours number provided.

Despite these program changes, Exit’s meetings went ahead. In both cities, it was the Universities who came to Exit’s rescue, providing alternative venues. Another outcome of this hitherto unheard of controversy was the amount of media coverage generated. The media interest was so intense that gatherings up the Queensland coast involved crowds in the hundreds. Exit is very grateful to Dr Trevor Davison of CQU and Janine Aitken of JCU Student Association for their support and good will shown in recent weeks.

Despite being a book which aims to empower older people and those who are seriously ill with accurate and reliable end-of-life information, Exit’s best-selling Peaceful Pill Handbook has been grouped alongside hard-core porn sites on the ban list. Yet, should Australians tolerate a Government who is intent on deciding for them which websites we may access. Surely this is a decision for the citizens of Australia, not simply its politicians?

The Rudd Government was never elected to play Big Brother. In doing so, it has over-stepped its mandate to govern. Short of the Clean Feed Bill being defeated in the Senate, Australians should prepare to join the likes of North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Burma and China where mandatory, state-level Internet censorship is routinely used/abused by those in power.
Betty was there at the end for Angy Belecciu

Melbourne Nancy’s Friend, 78 year old retired nurse educator, Betty Peters, finally broke her silence in May telling The Age newspaper that she was present when retired palliative care nurse and breast cancer sufferer, Angy Belecciu, took her Nembutal in a motel outside Melbourne on the evening of 23 March.

Well known as the star of the Do it Yourself with Betty series of Youtube.com videos, Betty Peters says she thought long and hard before speaking publicly about her involvement in the death of Angy.

Risking a police inquiry and possible charges of ‘assisting a suicide’, Betty said it was important to first alert Angy’s adult children that their mother was not in fact alone when she died (as The Age had previously headlined). On May 16 Betty told The Age:

“As Angy Belecciu [sic] prepared to drink her lethal dose of Nembutal in a motel room on March 23, Betty Peters felt the need to move away. The night was dark and the curtains were drawn in the unfamiliar room on the Mornington Peninsula, but Mrs Peters still needed to be cautious.

“When Angy said she was ready, I moved my chair back,” Mrs Peters, 78, said. “I didn’t want to be seen to be doing anything that could be seen to be helping or assisting her in any way.”

“As Ms Belecciu drank the drug that would end her 18-year battle with cancer in three quick gulps, Mrs Peters asked her how it tasted.

“She said it was sort of aniseedy and then started to drink some Baileys, but suddenly her head dropped forward.

“I kissed her on the side of the head and grabbed the glass. I then laid her back on the pillow and her eyes stayed closed. She looked very peaceful.”

For Mrs Peters, the task was an honour and the right thing to do. “I came away feeling like it was a real privilege to be with her.

“I also thought to myself, ‘Ooh, that’s the way to go,’ ” she said, adding that she would not do it again in a hurry. “I don’t want to be known as the lady who comes and sits with you. That’s not what this was about. Angie was special.”

Exitorial

There is nothing like nine hours in detention at Heathrow Airport to create intense interest in what one does and why.

The reason eventually provided by the British Home Office as to why my partner Dr Fiona Stewart and I were detained was so they could obtain ‘more information’ about our visit. Given some of the more spectacular reports that had featured in the British press prior to our arrival who could blame them?

It had been reported that I would be wooing OAPs (old age pensioners) off the streets and into my workshops, forcing them to make life & death decisions, teaching them how to die, and encouraging them to take this step! Those familiar with the work of Exit knew that this was not the case, but how were Immigration to know? Especially given the extreme claims made by some within the British right to die movement.

Despite the controversy, the UK trip was remarkably successful with several hundred people attending the meetings we held up and down the country. I would like to welcome the large number of new UK Exit members and I look forward to returning to London and Scotland in November, hopefully without the detention experience.

Back in Australia, the past month has been characterised by a heavy schedule of meetings and workshops on the east coast with more than 1000 people already attending these Exit events. As this newsletter goes to press I am about to return to SE Queensland and Northern NSW for a further round of events before heading to New Zealand.

In between these meetings I travelled to Tasmania where a Voluntary Euthanasia private member’s bill has recently been introduced by Nick McKim of the Greens and is now before a joint House committee. The report of this Committee, which is due to report back to Parliament on 2 October, could lead to Australia’s second VE law. However, with the failure of over 12 separate attempts to introduce similar legislation into Australian state parliaments since 1997, do not hold your breath.

Looking forward, Exit will be visiting the US in September with meetings planned for Los Angeles, San Francisco and Vancouver in Canada. In September we will hold our annual Bob Dent Day Conference, this year in Hobart. We are currently confirming speakers and will provide full details and registration in the August edition of Deliverance.

Finally I would like to thank my dedicated staff: Lindy Boyd, Amanda McClure, Kerri Dennis and Elaine Arch-Rowe. We are a tight knit team at Exit and the tireless efforts of these people are what keeps the organisation alive and prospering.
Newcastle Chapter Coordinator Gets ‘DNR’ Tattoo

Newcastle Chapter Coordinator, Vincent Phelan, 78, took the plunge in early June, joining Paula Westoby (Dunedin Exit Coordinator) in getting his first tattoo.

Like 80 year old Paula, Vince has chosen to wear his end of life politics on his chest with the message ‘Do Not Resuscitate’ now tattooed where it counts.

Featuring in the Newcastle Herald and many other Central Coast media, Vince said he had been told by doctors he is a candidate for stroke or heart attack.

Vince hopes the tattoo is an effective means of notifying treating physicians of his wishes should he become critically ill. One of only four people in Australia to take the step, Vince Phelan has been active in the pro-euthanasia movement for more than 30 years. He says he ‘took up the cause after seeing his brother battle emphysema.

The Newcastle Herald, however, reported that it was a pact with his friend, Stan, that led him to get the tattoo. ‘We talked about this a lot that if we were to have a stroke or heart attack which killed us dead, it would be a very happy ending,’ Mr Phelan said.

‘He had a stroke and he didn’t die. He’s in a terrible state in an aged-care home. He can’t speak or see or move the right side of his body. His whole quality of life has come to an end.’

Mr Phelan made the move after signing advance directive papers with his doctor. ‘I want the right to remain dead,’ Mr Phelan said.

Chapter Meeting Dates July - August 2009

Auckland NZ: Mt Albert Bridge Club Rooms, 751 New North Rd, Mt. Albert at 10 am, Tues 14 July. Contact Fern on 09-416-0004

Brisbane: Sat, 29 August at 10 am. Contact Angelika on 0431-275-840.

Canberra: Griffin Centre, Fri, 7 August at 12.30pm. Phone: 0401-315-631.

Castlemaine/Bendigo - Uniting Church Hall (Kindergarten Room) Fri, 3 July at 12.30 pm. BYO lunch. Tea/ coffee provided. Care Link speaker: Joan Loverso.

Cairns: Cominos House, Sat, 1 August. Contact John on 0427-486-402.

Central Coast: Kincumber Community Ctr, Sat, 29 August at 1.30 pm. Contact Bettina on 02-4369-4008.

Dorrigo: CWA Rooms, Tues, 30 June, July meeting Friday, 31 July at 3pm. Contact AI on 02-6657-2355.

Dunedin NZ: Sun, 19 July. Contact Paula on 03-471-9955.
Shame on Tasmanian Politicians
Robert Cordover Did Not Need to Die - at least Not on Sunday

As this newsletter goes to press, Tasmanian MND sufferer - Robert Cordover - has taken his own life. The reason? The Nick McKim Private Member’s Bill that is currently before the Tasmanian Parliament has been sent off to a joint Parliamentary committee. This is a tactic which in other states has seen similar initiatives sink without a trace.

Meanwhile, terminally ill people such as Mr Cordover are left facing an awful decision. To act to end their life while they can and to act alone, so they protect those they love.

If the McKim Bill had not been sent to a joint committee on 18 June, it could have led to Australia’s small island state becoming the 7th place in the world where a terminally ill person could legally request medical assistance to die.

When Exit held its recent Public Meeting/Workshop in Hobart (the same day Tasmanian politicians voted to refer the legislation to the committee) politicians showed little enthusiasm to bring a vote on the Bill. Despite initial grand expectations, there is now the possibility that the Bill will not be debated in the Tasmanian Parliament before that State’s next election. If this were to happen, as has occurred repeatedly in other Australian States, the entire legislative process would need to start again. This would effectively scuttle the Bill and, along with it, Green’s MP Nick McKim’s best intentions.

Since the world’s first VE law - the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act (of the Northern Territory) - was overturned by the Kevin Andrews’ Euthanasia Laws Bill in the Australian Parliament in March 1997, there have been no fewer than 12 separate attempts to have similar laws introduced elsewhere in this country.

Meanwhile, the world has moved on with the Netherlands, the US states of Oregon and Washington, Belgium and Luxembourg all passing right to die laws. And Australia has gone from leading the world to one of the most regressive of western nations. The Tasmanian committee is due to report back on 2 October. It remains to be seen if any progress will be made before their next election scheduled for early 2010.

Report from Glasgow

The fourth meeting of the UK tour was also Exit’s first visit to Scotland where the Unitarian Church in Glasgow played host to an interested crowd of around 80 participants.

Of all the meetings held in Britain, the most jovial was the one held in Glasgow. This came as something of a surprise to Exit, as the weather was cold and grey. However, any reputation the Scots may have had for being dour was quickly dispelled as warmth and humour became the characteristics of the meeting. Exit is very grateful for the hospitality shown.

Overall, the UK trip attracted significant local media interest. Building on interest shown in April by Time magazine, The Times, Independent, Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Scotsman and the Sun are a few who covered the tour.

BBC, ITV, Skynews, Europe 1 and ABC USA all ran news stories/profiles on TV & Web. Radio interviews were too numerous to mention. Nevertheless, Exit remains very pleased with the interest shown and looks forward to returning for a second series of meetings in November 2009.
**Ordering Guidelines**
The complete range of Exit books is now available worldwide. Orders of more than one item will be recalculated to save on postage. Please mail orders to your local Exit office.

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- **Killing Me Softly**
  - £33 (includes postage to UK)
  - US $50 (includes postage to US)
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- **Btw the Dying & Dead**
  - £32 (incl postage to UK)
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  - AUD $62 (incl postage to Aust)

- **Mademoiselle & Doctor DVD**
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  - AUD$38.50 (incl postage within Aust/ NZ)

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