Largest VE March Ever Held

The 10th Anniversary Conference of the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act - ‘Remembering ROTI’ - has been heralded as a huge success.

Held at the Dougherty Community Centre in Sydney, the conference was hosted by Exit & the VE Society of NSW and attracted around 200 delegates from all over Australia.

In addition to the many speakers who included politicians past and present, academics, and family members of those who used the ROTI Act, the highlight of the day was the lunchtime march through the streets of the busy Chatswood business district.

To the chant of “What Do We Want?” - “Choice in Dying” - “When Do We Want it?” - “Now”, marchers attracted the cheers of some shoppers and the bemusement of others.

Exit is delighted that supporters of all ages took to the streets carrying placards and donning purple and white sashes to make themselves known, and get the message heard.

The march was reported on ABC radio’s PM program on Friday night, and followed a morning piece on ‘AM’ which featured an interview with Conference speaker, Senator Amanda Vanstone.

Overall, the conference attracted significant media around the country and featured in TV news reports (ABC and SBS), various radio, print and on-line, including AP and News.com.

Another highlight of the day was the passionate and moving afternoon session which heard from the relatives of three of the four people who used the ROTI Act.

These people were: Judy Dent (from Darwin - wife of Bob Dent), Dave Mills (from Cairns - widower of Janet Mills) and Ray (from Sydney - son of Valerie, the 4th person to use the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act).

Prior to the conference, Ray had never spoken publicly of the death of his mother. He chose the Remembering ROTI Conference to share his family’s story.

Bus Drivers Needed

Supporters wanting to participate in the National Day of Shame and who have current bus drivers licences are needed by Exit. Drivers are required to make the trip from Sydney to Canberra on Sunday 25th March 2007, returning Tuesday 27th. All costs covered by Exit. Interested: Tel 1300 10 3948
Peaceful Pill Handbook Seized by Customs

On 20 September 2006, authorities in Brisbane seized a suitcase containing 45 copies of Dr Philip Nitschke’s new Peaceful Pill Handbook.

Intended as display copies for the book’s Australian launch by SA MP Hon Sandra Kanck at the Sydney ROTI Conference, the books are now with Australian Customs.

To recover the books and to assert the right of Australians to end of life information, Exit is now working with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in Sydney to mount a legal challenge to this decision. Support has been offered from senior lawyers and it is expected that a challenge to the Federal Government’s heavy handed behaviour will be mounted in the Federal court. Details of this action, a case considered to be “in the public interest”, will be published in the next newsletter.

PP Handbook Launches in Toronto & Sydney

Exit International was delighted and honoured to have renowned Final Exit author and VE activist Derek Humphry launch The Peaceful Pill Handbook at the World Federation Society conference in Toronto in Canada in September.

The book is dedicated to Derek “for his courage and compassion in showing the way”.

The event was attended by around 50 people and generated significant book sales at the conference. The launch was covered by CTV (Canadian TV), CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), and The Globe and Mail and La Presse newspapers.

The Australian launch of The Peaceful Pill Handbook was held in Sydney at the Remembering ROTI Conference on 22 September.

Despite the seizure of the book by Australian Customs, several inspection copies were available and South Australian MP Hon Sandra Kanck launched the book, arguing that Australians have a right to free speech.

At the morning tea launch, Philip Nitschke spoke about the long research and writing process while coauthor Fiona Stewart read the book’s last chapter.

Luckily, the seizure of these books does not appear to have impacted negatively upon Exit supporters’ individual orders from Exit USA.

To date, Exit knows of no one who has not received their order because of action by Australian Customs. Rather, the first print run has already sold out. Exit Australia has been informed that a second print run is currently under way.

So, if you have ordered the Handbook and are awaiting delivery take heart. It is likely you will receive your book. However, if anyone does receive notice from Customs that their delivery has been seized, please notify the Exit office immediately. Exit believes it is our fundamental right to access information. We will not allow the Government, via its insidious legislative arm, to dictate to us.
Some months ago my son and I came home from the movies. My wife told me that she had received a phone call from Philip Nitschke. He had mentioned today’s forum and was hoping to have people speak of their experiences in contribution to the euthanasia debate.

I must admit that I was a little shaken at the prospect of speaking in public about what was a difficult time in my life. A part of me just simply wished that my wife had never received the phone call.

But I sat down and had a good think. Eventually I came to the conclusion that I had to stand here before you today.

Why? Well, there are a number of reasons.

The initial reason was that I have a sense of gratitude and obligation to Philip Nitschke. I don’t know Philip very well. We only met on a handful of occasions several years ago. But I feel that he must be a man of tremendous compassion, dedication and conviction.

Philip helped my mum to die with dignity. For that I am eternally grateful. I can only guess that his choices have come at considerable cost to him in his life. I don’t think there are many people who would be prepared to do what he has done. So, I also feel an obligation to support him in return for the support he gave my mother.

Then I had to ask myself. What do I want to achieve here? Well I suppose it is really pretty simple. I would like other people to have the same opportunity as my mother. The opportunity to make their own choices in regard to their own lives.

I look at this audience and I see the people who may one day vote and decide on ‘right to die’ legislation. And in terms of what I want to achieve today, what is it that you need to hear from me? I think that is also pretty simple.

You need to be reassured that you will be doing the right thing when you vote ‘Yes’ for appropriate legislation. Unfortunately I cannot give that reassurance to you totally.

Your conscience will have to guide you. But it may just be of some help for you to know that I look back on my mother’s death as a positive experience.

What does that mean? A positive experience.

I am sure that many of you have lost loved ones and know only too well how difficult those times can be. I could stand up here and describe the loss that my family shared when my mother died. That was not a positive experience.

But I am not really here to talk about me. I believe that I am here to speak on behalf of my mother and also on behalf of the people who one day may need to confront a similar situation that my mother did. In the end their choices may be different to my mother’s but I firmly believe that they must have the same opportunity as my mother.

So what does it mean? A positive experience.

It was not a positive experience that my mother had inoperable and terminal cancer. It was not a positive experience that my mother faced the prospect of a long and painful death. It was not a positive experience that my mother, perhaps a little old fashioned but a deeply personal woman, was terrified of losing her dignity as she became increasingly dependent on others for her ordinary bodily functions.

It was not a positive experience that members of the medical profession extolled the worth of modern palliative care and actively tried to dissuade my mother from her choice, and to dissuade us from giving our support to her choice. It was not a positive experience for my mother to have to painfully travel interstate to access ‘right to die’ legislation. This should have been available in her home town.

It was, however, a very positive experience to deal with several other members of the medical profession whose humanity and compassion for my mother was very moving. But most significantly, it was a positive experience to see my mother find her peace.

Thank you.
The 16th Meeting of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies proved a mixed bag for Exit. On the one hand, the conference presented Exit Director Dr Philip Nitschke with the chance to discuss Exit’s DIY approach to end of life choices - for which he received overwhelming support from rank and file.

On the other hand, Philip received considerable criticism from others in the world right to die movement. Some such as Dr Rob Jonquiere of Right to Die Netherlands argued that Exit’s approach to end of life choices was harming the movement. Jonquiere stated that even if it takes 50 years to achieve, it is far better to work quietly with the politicians to achieve legislative change.

The new CEO of Right to Die Canada Don Babey shared similar views. Reported in The Globe and Mail saying “the right to die movement is not about so-called suicide potions or pills; it is about encouraging people to make their end of life wishes known through advanced care directives ...” Mr Babey was highly critical of Exit, and Dr Nitschke personally. Not surprisingly, Exit’s critics had no answers to the age-old question of how to provide people with end of life choices in the absence of legislation.

Given the disappointingly conservative tone of the conference with it’s total preoccupation with the pursuit of legislative solutions, together with the low attendance numbers (only about 200 delegates attended. Exit has serious reservations about the relevance of the World Federation in determining the future of the global VE movement.

Exit demonstrates how to convert a Helium nozzle at the Exit table

New Nancy Crick Book Launches

More than 4 years after her controversial death Gold Coast Exit Chapter Leader, John Edge, has written a tell-all book about the life and death of Nancy Crick, and his own activism in the VE debate.

Titled Telling it Straight, this new book is a passionate insider’s look at the voluntary euthanasia movement and the decision of VE supporter Nancy Crick to challenge the law by having 21 people with her when she died in May 2002.

Telling it Straight was launched by Marshall Perron at the Crick family home on Queensland’s Gold Coast on 20 September. In Telling it Straight John Edge goes into detail about his role in assisting Nancy, describing her search for the drugs she needed and his role in ensuring that her wish for a peaceful death was successful.

Already, the Queensland Police Commissioner has announced that he will be examining the book to see whether it contains new evidence that could lead to John Edge (and others) being charged with assisting a suicide. Telling it Straight is available from John Edge on 0421-426-530 or Email: jedge@norex.com.au

New EXIT Brochure

A new Exit International brochure is now available. If you know of anyone who likes what we do but is not yet a Supporter of Exit, we urge you to spread the word. Extra brochures are available from Exit.
Last Chance for 2006 Exit Workshops

Exit’s end of year workshops on the east coast of Australia are events not to be missed. Despite the seizure of The Peaceful Pill Handbook by Australian Customs, Exit expects to have copies of the Handbook available at workshops for all who are able to place an order with Exit International US.

This means that workshop participants will be able to purchase from Exit International US copies of the book, but collect their book at the workshop.

Workshop Dates
Maroochydore - 11 November
Brisbane - 13 November
Gold Coast - 16 November
Lismore - 18 November
Newcastle - 20 November
Wollongong - 22 November
Sydney - 14 December
Canberra - 15 December
Melbourne - 18 December
Hobart - 20 December
Adelaide - 22 December

To register for a workshop, please call the Exit office on 1300 10 EXIT (3948). You will then be sent an invitation by mail several weeks prior to the workshop. Upon receipt of this letter participants are asked to phone Exit with their RSVP.

Success in Mexico

The Exit ‘Mexican Holiday’ has been rescheduled for 2007 due to the heightened terrorism threat associated with the carrying of liquids on planes. Despite this, Exit is pleased to confirm that the small group who were unable to alter travel plans and made the Mexican trip were all successful.

They were accompanied into Mexico and returned to Australia with their precious veterinary liquid Nembutal. Prices ranged from US$15 per bottle to US$33. Full details are available in the updated 2nd edition of The Peaceful Pill Handbook now available from the US.

Veterinary shop in Tijuana

Exitorial

The past several months have been an extraordinarily busy time for Exit. Not only have we seen the publication of The Peaceful Pill Handbook (the culmination of over a year’s work) but we have travelled to Canada to speak at the World Federation conference and then returned to Sydney to host along with the VE Society of NSW - the very successful ‘Remembering ROTI’ Conference.

The highlight of the World Federation Conference was the NuTech gathering which Exit Co-hosted with Derek Humphry (ERGO). Here we had a chance to share our technologies with other VE organisations.

It is clear the developments with the Peanut Project put Exit at the vanguard of R&D in the global Right to Die movement. Effort is now being put into acquiring important spectrometry equipment (drug testing equipment) which will test the composition and purity of the first Peaceful Pill.

Closer to home, we have turned our attention to the National Day of Shame in our nation’s capital - Canberra - on 26 March 2007. In the next Deliverance we will be offering package tours enabling Exit supporters from all over the country to gather in Sydney and travel - convoy style - as a 2007 “Freedom Ride” to Canberra. Once there, we will deliver the Condolence Books (which have been distributed to all Chapter Leaders and which are currently filling with signatures) to Kevin Andrews and Tony Burke (the instigators of the ‘Euthanasia No’ campaign 10 years ago), and participate in other Canberra actions. We are delighted to have the ABC’s Phillip Adams as our guest speaker at the Memorial Dinner at the National Museum on Monday night.

Registrations for the National Day of Shame will open in November and I would personally encourage everyone who is able, to join me and others who support choice at the end of life for the Freedom Ride of a lifetime to Canberra. Let’s remind the politicians that dying with dignity is the human right of us all.

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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.
Exit Form

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

Exit Shop

* Exit T-shirt (Exit purple - My Life My Choice) □ A$25
  Sizes XXL □ XL □ L □ Med □ Sm □ (includes $4.50 postage)

* Killing MeSoftly VE and the Road to the Peaceful Pill □ $A37
  (by Drs Philip Nitschke & Fiona Stewart, Penguin)
  (includes postage)

* DVD - Mademoiselle & the Doctor □ A$55
  90 Minute Director’s Cut
  (includes postage)

* Exit ‘Die Like a Dog’ Stubbie Holder □ A$10
  (includes $4.50 postage)

* Exit ‘My Life - My Choice’ Shopping Bag □ A$7.50
  (includes $2.50 postage)

Contact Details

First Name(s)……………………………………
Last Name…………………………………
Address……………………………………..
Postcode……………………………………
eMail………………………………………
Telephone……………………………………

I am paying $……………………………………
on (today’s date)……………………………

Visa □ Mastercard □ Cheque □

Credit Card No……………………………………
Name on Card……………………………………
Signature……………………………………
Expiry Date…………../…………………………

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Images from ‘Remembering ROTI’
Bob Dent Day - 22 Sept 2006

Marshall Perron addressing the conference

Kep Enderby QC with Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence
(Marshall Perron & Ian Cohen in background)

Getting ready for the March

Hon Sandra Kanck out marching

Dawn with the friendly police escort
Images from ‘Remembering ROTI’
Bob Dent Day - 22 Sept 2006 (part II)

Exit Chapter Leader Coordinator Vince Phelan with friends

Brisbane Chapter Leader Angelika Minner

Protesting

Marching with Police escort

Kerri Dennis, Dave Mills, Philip Nitschke

Street scene with a difference