

# LOCKDOWN

## HOW COVID HAS CHANGED THE WORLD

*A few short months ago, the Exit team were busy preparing for another ambitious year which was to include two Australian workshop tours, multiple London workshops and the first use of Sarco in Switzerland. However then came COVID-19!*

Ever since the virus appeared in January Exit Director, Philip Nitschke, knew that it was only a matter of time until the pandemic caught up with the organisation. However, no one could have foreseen the extent of the changes

that were about to descend upon us (and which are yet to come). As an organisation whose members have an average age of 75 years, there was never any doubt that Exit would not be significantly affected by the COVID-19 virus.

In a very short period of time, Exit has seen its face-2-face workshops for the year cancelled and a significant delay to the completion of Sarco. However all is not lost!

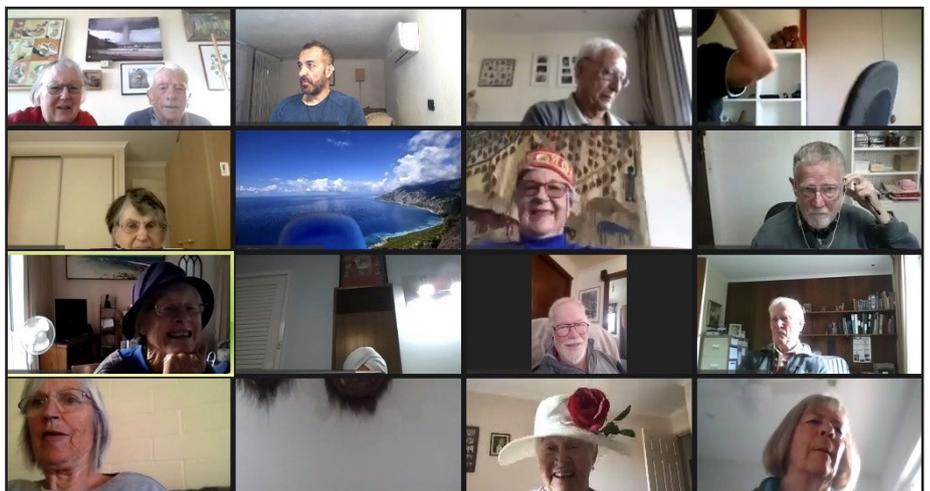
In this newsletter, Exit will explain how we are adapting to the 'new

normal' in terms of taking activities online and staying connected with Exit members around the world.

Already, several local chapters of Exit have held Zoom meetings and coffee/chat sessions with their members. Because they have been online, rural members have been able to participate (for the first time). Equally impressive, was the organisation's first fully-online, real time workshop for members that was held on Saturday 20 June. This is Exit's 'new normal' and we promise it will be exciting!!

### IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Lockdown: COVID-19 & Exit
- 2 Exit Workshops Go Online
- 3 New Dexit Podcasts
- 4 Sarco Nears Completion
- 5 Exitorial
- 6 The Chloroquine Controversies
- 6 PPeH August 2020 Update
- 7 Exit Online Workshop Dates 2020
- 8 The Problem of Inciting a Suicide



Canberra Members' Zoom Meeting: May 2020

## EXIT WORKSHOPS GO ONLINE

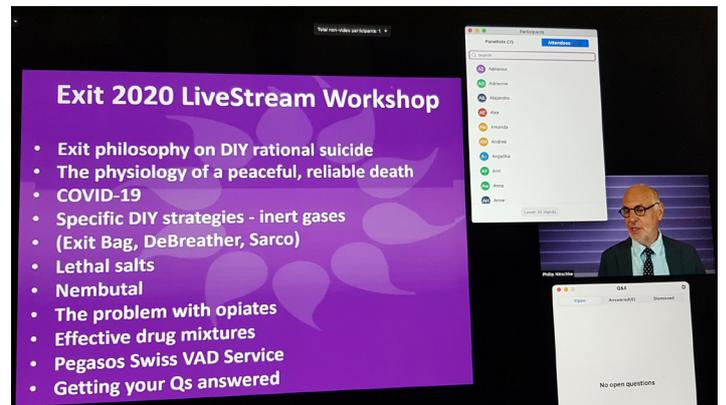
It was with considerable excitement and a little trepidation that Exit held its first Zoom workshop on Saturday 20 June. The event lasted for 3 hours and involved over 400 Exit Members and *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* subscribers in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

The 2020 online workshops are a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Exit acknowledges that not all members are 'on the Internet', for those who are the new-format workshops allow members to come together in real time to listen and interact with Philip Nitschke (just as they would for a face-2-face workshop).

June's workshop commenced with a discussion of Exit's unique non-medical approach to death and dying. The workshop discussed in particular issues associated with Covid; not only the type of death that can be expected but other need-to-know issues such as the inclusion of Covid-specific clauses in one's advance directive. Practical issues were also, of course, discussed and included topics such the salts, the barbiturates, problems with the opiates, the USA multi-drug protocols, the Pegasos Swiss Association service, as well as the associated legal issues.

Feedback from the workshop has been extremely positive with members seemingly grateful for the opportunity to stay in touch with Philip and have their questions answered in a less pressured (and some might say less chaotic) environment than is often the case in face-2-face workshops.

From Philip's point of view, the online workshops represent the way of the future. They are less stressful for him as he is relieved of the need to travel as much. There is also no need to set up and pack up the meeting room, and he need not worry (as much) that the technology (that comes with hired venues) may not work properly. Exit now has 3 more online workshops planned across various global time zones (see page 7 for details).



*Workshop Topics*



*Questions were answered via the Q&A box*



*Practice session with the green screen*

## DOXIT PODCASTS

After many months of thinking (but with little acting), Exit finally launched its new Doxit Podcast series of conversations in April 2020. The Doxit Podcasts are another response to the COVID-19 situation we all find ourselves in. They are a particularly useful way of bringing issues of interest and current relevance to the fore and presenting discussion in an engaging, educative and entertaining manner.

Wikipedia defines podcasts as an episodic series of spoken word audio files that the user downloads to their phone or other device and which are designed for easy listening at a time and place of one's choosing. The Doxit Podcasts are subtitled 'The Good Death' and cover issues ranging from the topics of each month's *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* updates to matters that arise in the mainstream media and academic publications.

To date, the Doxit podcasts have covered:

- COVID-19 & the Good Death
- Advance Directives in the time of Pandemic
- Happy Hypoxia: What's it all about?
- Lethal Salts & the Law
- Lethal Salts - Part II
- The Rise & Fall of Chloroquine
- The R2D Debreather & More
- Miscarriage: The Story of Graham Morant

Recorded and published *most* Sunday's the Doxit podcasts feature Drs Philip Nitschke & Fiona Stewart in conversation. This husband & wife team are unique, not only because they both work in Exit but because combined they bring more than two decades worth of experience, insight and expertise in the field of the good death. Indeed, their long and deep knowledge of the right to die movement make their podcasts the 'go to' place for cutting-edge analysis in this field.

Far from treating their listeners as a dummy audience, the Doxit podcasts seek to provoke and challenge the status quo. Whether it be Philip explaining the physiological implications of a peaceful and reliable Salts death, or Fiona's legal analysis of Graham Morant's recent appeal loss (Morant was the first person, globally, to be found guilty of *inciting* a suicide (Morant's wife Jenny, an Exit member, died in 2014), their discussion with each other is challenging, but generous.

The Doxit Podcasts are free and are on both the Exit International and Peaceful Pill Handbook websites. Or you can search for the word 'Doxit' on any of the main Podcast platforms, including:

- > Spotify
- > Anchor
- > Apple Podcasts
- > Google Podcasts
- > Breaker
- > Overcast
- > RadioPublic & Copy RSS



## SARCO NEARS COMPLETION

In spite of COVID-19, work on the Sarco has been progressing during lockdown. This is perhaps an irony given the '(Re) Design Death' exhibition at the Cube Design Museum in the Netherlands (where Sarco 1.0 is on display until February 2021) was forced to close its doors due to the pandemic back in March. It is pleasing to see that Cube has since re-opened and is welcoming visitors, albeit with the usual Dutch prerequisite of 1.5m social distancing and copious amounts of hand sanitiser.

For readers who may have missed it, the Sarco is a 3D-printed 'euthanasia capsule' that has been invented to provide a peaceful, reliable and lawful death. More than just an environment which provides for a low-oxygen death, Sarco is also a recognised work of art, having been exhibited at Venice Design last year and at Cube in 2020.

Beyond its life as an art installation, the second Sarco is destined for real life/ death use in Switzerland later this year. The Sarco operates using liquid nitrogen which in turn creates a low oxygen environment. The person inside the capsule continues to breathe normally (in/out, in/out). However the air that they breathe will not contain enough oxygen to sustain life. The user will feel slightly euphoric (from the low level of oxygen) before losing consciousness and dying peacefully soon after.

The reason why Sarco is going to be used first in Switzerland is because of Swiss law which states that assisting someone to die is not a crime, as long as three criteria are followed:

- a) the person assisting must have altruistic motives
- b) the person receiving the assistance must have capacity
- c) the person receiving assistance must initiate the process themselves.

While a person using Sarco will not need outside assistance, the mere act of making the Sarco available for use is the legal sticking point. For this reason, it is most prudent (from a legal perspective) that Sarco is used - at least initially - in a country where assisting a suicide is not outlawed.

As Sarco has been created to be 100% mobile - and able to be taken to a beautiful location of one's choosing - a custom -designed trailer has now been commissioned. The end (or the new beginning) is thus nigh!



*3D-printed Sarco 2.0 nears completion*



*Sarco handle in detail*



*Sarco 2.0 with doors open*

## LOCKDOWN - QUO VADIS?

It's a post-COVID world as they say, and the virus is not finished yet! Fortunately, I am able to report that Exit is alive and kicking. During the last three months I have been living in the relative safety of the countryside. Despite often poor broadband, I have managed (like so many others) to master Zoom and take some professional lessons in the area of podcasting (thank you Jonathan). It has been a challenging but interesting time. I commend the Dexit podcasts to you.

Looking forward, I want to assure all members that Exit's face-2-face workshops and chapter meetings will resume as soon as it is safe to do so. As I write, we are surveying our Chapter Coordinators to gauge their plans (and preferences) for face-2-face versus online meetings, at least until 2021. The organisation is keen to provide the technical and other support that they might need to stay resourced - so you - the members - can stay informed.

One critical element in such back-up is the appointment six months ago of Damian Flowers and the re-establishment of the Exit Melbourne office in Ross House in Flinders Lane. Damian is the older brother of Angelique Flowers who was the subject of Janine Hosking's Sydney Film Festival winning documentary, 35 Letters. Angelique, 31, died tragically of bowel cancer in August 2008.

Damian has been involved with Exit for the past 13 years. In 2020, he has taken up the part-time staff position. Damian now divides his time between Exit and Pegasos Swiss Association. Damian is Exit's link with Pegasos and, as such, brings unique skills and expertise that help our two organisations to work so well together.



*Damian Flowers - back home in Melbourne after 18 years in London*

## NEW CONFERENCE KEYNOTE VIDEO

With COVID dictating our lives and work in 2020, it was a 'just in time' scenario that allowed me to give a keynote address to over 1000 medical students at last year's AMSA annual conference in Sydney. AMSA has now very generously made the footage of this presentation available and so we have **posted it on the Exit website (under 'Videos)**. The topic I spoke to was 'Pulling the Plug'. Given my often-vexed relationship with the medical profession, it was good fun to analyse the proposition from a number of different angles.



## NUTECH - 26 SEPTEMBER 2020

Finally, as this newsletter goes to press, we are busy organising the 2020 fully-online NuTech conference. This year NuTech will be held on Saturday 26 September. However, because this year's conference will have no face-2-face component, its organisation across time zones is inevitably difficult. For example, a time zone that agrees with the US, does not agree with Australia. Because of this, and because some people are bound to miss out attending in real time (because they are neither night owls nor early-risers), the conference will be recorded and made available on subscription at a later date.

I am excited by the speakers we have already confirmed and look forward to releasing the full program in the coming weeks.

In closing I would like to thank all Exit Members for their continued support during this difficult year. Your membership of Exit is greatly appreciated by us all.



*Philip Nitschke*

# THE CHLOROQUINE CONTROVERSIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all our lives irrevocably and has thrown up some strange things in the process. One of these is the renewed focus upon the drugs hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine phosphate.

While Exit published a chapter in the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* on the chloroquine phosphate back in 2015, the June update expands the discussion to include hydroxychloroquine.

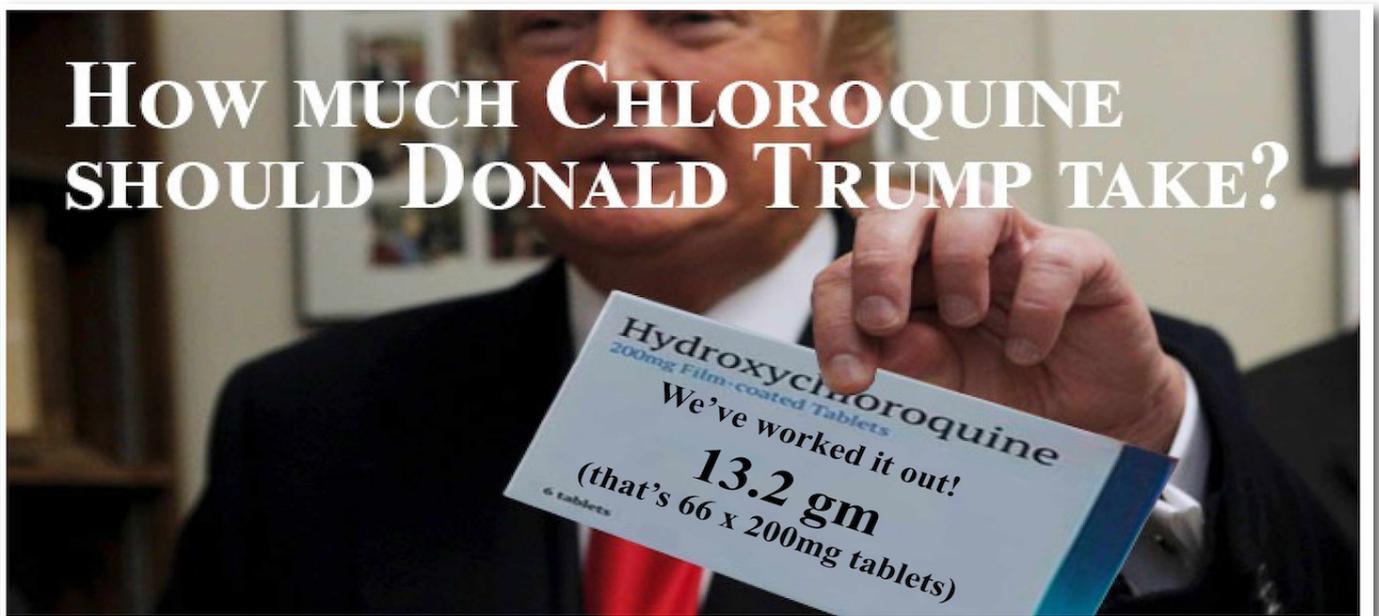
While most people had barely heard of chloroquine before the pandemic, the US President soon changed that. In causing a run on the drug, everyone has now heard of

it. Touted by Trump as a game-changer in terms of saving lives, the irony remains that chloroquine is also effective as a drug to *end* life.

The June update to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* examines all aspects of a chloroquine death.

*The Peaceful Pill eHandbook* is available at: [www.peacefulpill.com](http://www.peacefulpill.com)

A 24-month subscription comes with access to the Peaceful Pill forums where members can ask questions & join the group discussion.



## AUGUST 2020 PPEH UPDATE

As always, there is a new update to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* in production. The August 2020 update concerns the new, revised protocols for the multi-drug formula used in the US states where assisted dying is lawful.

In the US, because Nembutal has been priced out of the range of the ordinary person, doctors have needed to devise an alternative approach that is both peaceful and reliable. The protocol concerns four different drugs which, when taken together in certain amounts, gives these terminally ill people the peaceful death they so crave.

While each drug is only available on script, it may be that some people are already being prescribed one or more of those that are needed. The new chapter examines: DDMP1&2 and DDMA. Coming in August!



## EXIT ONLINE WORKSHOPS 2020

In spite of the pandemic, or perhaps because of it, being able to take control of your life and death has never been more important. For this reason, Exit International has taken our unique, flagship Workshop program online.

The first workshop was held on Saturday 20 June at 3pm in the afternoon (Australian time). If you missed the live-broadcast, Exit will be making the recording available free to members in the coming weeks. Of course the Q&A will not be able to be included.

### FORTHCOMING ONLINE WORKSHOPS

- **Nth America - Saturday 18 July 2020 at 11am (CDT - Central)**
- **UK/ EU - Saturday 15 August 2020 at 1pm (BST - British Summer Time)**
- **Australasia - Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 11am DST)**

While each workshop is essentially the same (with some tweaks), the reason to spread the workshops across the



global time zones is to allow members and subscribers to pick the time zone that best suits them.

The Online Workshops represent the breaking of new ground and, in some respects, are long overdue. Live-streaming was trialed by Exit in 2019/2020 (pre-Covid) with 4 events held. These livestreams were similar in content to the public meeting part of Exit Workshops. These new 2020 events are the practical workshop segments proper.

While some of the 2019 livestreams were troubled by technology and low bandwidth (which meant a disjointed video image or sound), the advent of new broadcast technology has led to an online workshop experience that is smooth, immediate and interactive. That said, the 2019 livestream experience was excellent preparation for the post-COVID world of workshops.

Registrations for the 3 forthcoming **Exit Online Workshops** are now open. To register, go to the Exit International website, click on Workshop Register link on the homepage and follow the prompts. No special software is required and logging-in is easy.

## NEED INSTANT ANSWERS? ASK EXIT'S NEW CHAT

In keeping with Exit's approach of using the Internet to stay in touch with members, we are pleased to announce a new real time chat support button on the Exit website.

One thing that Exit has in our favour as a global organisation is that we have a multi-lingual team around the world. This means that someone, somewhere, is usually online and able to help with members' queries. The small blue button in the bottom right corner of the Exit website means that someone is available to help. Clearly, this is

not a button for end of life advice. But we can help with other stuff such as memberships, workshops, forums, books etc. Look forward to hearing from you.



## THE PROBLEM OF INCITING A SUICIDE?

The Dexit Podcast of 28 June came hot on the heels of Australian man, Graham Morant's failed appeal against his dual convictions of inciting and assisting his wife Jenny (an Exit member) to suicide in 2014.

While over the years, a handful of people have been convicted of assisting with a suicide, no one has been found guilty of encouraging someone to suicide. That was until Graham Morant in Australia and Michelle Carter in the US.

Leaving the Carter text-message case aside for now, Morant was found guilty in November 2018 of inciting Jenny Morant to suicide (apparently so he could get her \$1.4 million life insurance). In court, Justice Peter Davis described Graham Morant as exploiting a 'sick and depressed woman'.

While the story sounds credible, here's an alternative narrative based on Jenny's 2014 correspondence with Exit:

*Dear Dr Nitschke*

*I desperately need your help, to assist me to end my life in a peaceful manner. I am in chronic pain for the past 3 years now, with Spinal Surgery not giving me any relief, in August 2011, I fractured my spine from Osteo Perosis, and I had 3 rods, 2 plates and cement injected into my spine, but the operation was not a success and now I am having to take large amounts on a daily basis of Oxycontin, Endone ..., but most days I do not get out of bed because the pain and the nausea is so bad ...*



*Graham Morant outside court in Brisbane*



*I am 56 years old and I have no quality of life any longer, the Doctors have tried giving me injections into my spine to block the nerves, but nothing has worked, and I am so tired of being in pain every day, I now need your help ..., I have admired you for many years, and now I really need your guidance and experience.*

*Many Thanks & Kind Regards*

*Jenny Morant*

Three months later Jenny wrote again:

*Please help me, I have discussed [this] with my Husband but he is too upset to help me, so i am all alone with my pain & I have no one to help me except you, as I live in a rural community & find it hard to drive off the mountain where we live, and my husband won't take me to your workshops, so I could talk to you, Please I beg you help me.*

When Exit discovered that we had emails to this effect, we made contact with Graham Morant's defence counsel. A new appeal came about as a result of this correspondence. While Philip Nitschke does not know Mr Morant, Philip felt a strong moral obligation to try to help a man who was convicted at trial by a jury who - clearly - did not have the full facts. How could the burden of proof of 'beyond reasonable doubt' be discharged when Jenny clearly had a mind of her own?

These issues are discussed in detail in the 'Miscarriage of Justice' Podcast of 28 June. It is recommended listening. Why? Because it now not only matters legally, what you might *do* to help a loved one to die peacefully, it may also matter what you say!



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