



## QUEENSLAND ASSISTED SUICIDE TRIAL: JURY SAYS 'GUILTY'

On 16 February in the Supreme Court of Queensland, 50 year old teacher, Merin Nielsen, was found guilty of the assisted suicide of former Exit International member, Frank Ward.

It was alleged by the prosecution that Mr Nielsen had travelled to Tijuana to buy Nembutal for Mr Ward. On 20 June 2009, Frank Ward was found dead at his Brisbane home from an overdose of Mexican veterinary Nembutal. Exit understands that Frank drank his 'peaceful pill' following a stroke (from which he had largely recovered) and after the death of his wife for whom had cared for more than 25 years as her MS grew progressively worse.

Exit Director, Dr Philip Nitschke sat through much of the trial while Exit International Nancy's Friends, Bron Norman and Beryl Morman, both appeared as witnesses for the prosecution. Following the verdict, Justice Jean Dalton sentenced Mr Nielsen to 3 years jail with a non-parole period of 6 months.

Dr Nitschke said that while Mr Nielsen might have been naive in his attempts to help Frank Ward, he 'did not de-

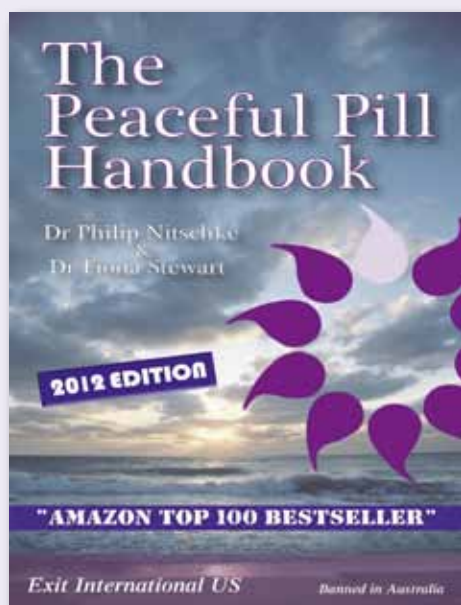
serve jail for being a good friend to him'. 'It seems only common sense that Mr Ward should have left his modest estate to a best friend.

'I fail to see why such decisions are so controversial in the courts. It is unfair, but that is the law and this case is another illustration of why the law needs changing' he said.



*Exit Members Bron Norman & Beryl Morman were called as witnesses for the prosecution. They are here in conversation with Dr Philip Nitschke outside the Supreme Court in Brisbane.*

## PPEH UPDATES FOR 2012



As the online *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* enters its fourth year of publication, exciting new updates are planned for 2012. These will include:

- South America Summary
- Uses & Abuses of Insulin
- International roll-out of DIY barbiturate powder testing program
- Nitrogen News (ongoing)

Remember ONLY the online *PPeH* contains updates. While the print version is revised each year, if you are on email, you are advised to subscribe to the eHandbook for the full benefit of this specialist information on your end-of-life choices.

To subscribe visit: [www.peacefulpill.com](http://www.peacefulpill.com)

To register for Exit's forums, visit: [www.peacefulpill.com/forum](http://www.peacefulpill.com/forum)

## CHAPTER LEADERS OF FUTURE NEW TRAINING RESOURCE VIDEO & KIT

With new Chapters of Exit International being established regularly, Brisbane Coordinator Angelika Minner saw the need to create an Induction Kit which would be the lead resource for new coordinators, regardless of their location. Using her own experiences and advice from some of Exit's leading current Coordinators, Angelika has created a practical Kit full of need-to-know information for establishing and operating a successful Exit chapter.

The Kit which includes a video and resource folder was launched at the Chapter Weekend in Sydney to much praise.



*Brisbane Chapter Coordinator (& Film Director) Angelika Minner presenting the new Exit resource kit at the Planning Weekend*



The Induction Kit covers everything from how to communicate with members, the people skills required to manage groups, how to establish Exit's unique Coffee 'n Chat program, finances, media and working as part of a coordinated team of volunteers.

## DOLOXENE WINS A REPRIEVE: ON APPEAL

In a surprise move, the lethal drug Doloxene (dextropropoxyphene) has been given a 3-month reprieve after the drug company Aspen Pharmacare appealed the decision of the Therapeutic Goods Administration to deregister the drug on 1 March 2012.

Interestingly, both the AMA and the Consumers Health Forum have criticised Aspen, claiming saying the availability of the drugs represent a 'major consumer safety issue'. In the interim Doloxene and Digesic packaging will both carry increased patient warnings in regard to triggering heart problems. Exit invites Members to let us know how they have (or have not) continued to obtain

Doloxene in the face of the drug's deregistration. You can email your experiences to [contact@exitinternational.net](mailto:contact@exitinternational.net)



# CHAPTER PLANNING WEEKEND IN PICTURES



*The group at work around the table with Angelika Minner (Brisbane) at left*



*Di Lange (left) (Bundaberg), Dr David Swanton (Canberra) & Kay Scurr (Hobart) clowning around with Exit's Nitrogen system.*



*Drs Philip Nitschke & Fiona Stewart discussing the recent Katoomba meeting when over 40 new members joined on the day*



*Dr Nitschke demonstrating the Nitrogen system to an interested group of Chapter Coordinators*



*Julia Harrison (Adelaide) & Muriel Arnott (Melbourne)*



*From left to right: Bron Norman (Sunshine Coast), Yvonne Spielman (Sydney) & Paula Westoby (Dunedin NZ)*

### **AHPRA INVESTIGATION**

While the media has been following the machinations of the investigation of the Australian Health Practitioners' Regulatory Authority into my conduct as a doctor, I have been advised not to comment publicly on what is going on. This has of course left me in a difficult position. The investigation seems to be focusing on the concept of 'good medical practice'. But what is this you might ask? The Special Access Scheme is for drugs that are inherently risky.

In the *Sydney Morning Herald* in an article titled 'Threat to Nitschke's career after bid to import nembutal' on 14 February, barrister Robert Richter was quoted saying the concept was 'nebulous' at best. In the same article, Dr Fiona Stewart went as far as to state that 'giving terminally ill people access to lethal drugs is good medical practice'.

And this is not surprising as it is something we have known at Exit for a very long time. When a seriously ill person has access to lethal drugs they most often will not take the drugs. Instead they will lock them away in the cupboard safe in knowing that if the need ever arose they have that option. Most of us will battle on against our disease but this will not stop any one of us having the choice; not to mention the release which comes from a good night's sleep which a drug such as Nembutal can provide. So, if politicians can't or won't change the law, why the controversy? And why make dying even harder?

### **NITROGEN PROGRESS - UPDATE II**

Following strong approval by Exit's Chapter Coordinators at the January Sydney gathering, and with the financial support of one very generous Exit member, I am now in a position to announce that the new Nitrogen system will launch in Australia in early May 2012. Max Dog Brewing will ship the cylinders from Sydney. In the coming months, an online store is expected to be created and will initially be available nationally with, we hope, New Zealand, the UK and Nth America to follow.

The final cost of the cylinders will depend on freight charges but is expected to be around the \$500 mark. This is well worth the investment as the cylinders will store for years, the gauges and gas flow are all pre-programmed, they are refillable if this

is required and Nitrogen is, of course an undetectable gas, even at autopsy.

### **2012 MEETINGS PROGRAM**

For the remainder of 2012, Exit's meeting program will take a new turn. The organisation will not be running any more information workshops in Australia until year's end. What we will be doing is holding theme-specific meetings instead. For example, the next planned meetings will take place in May in Sydney and Melbourne and will focus exclusively on the quantitative drug testing process.

In Europe and Nth America, Exit will hold combined meetings to allow members all over the world to undertake DIY drug testing if they wish but also to simply come along and hear the latest news about the end-of-life strategies.

Importantly, with Forum membership continuing to increase apace, the forums have become the new venue for asking questions and receiving answers, and not only from myself and other Exit experts. The forums harbour all manner of expertise. I am constantly impressed by the level of knowledge and amount of material which some within our community are sharing with others. Of course some advice proffered is less useful and this is why the forums are moderated by a team so that members can be assured that the information is both accurate and reliable.

### **VE & THE LAW**

Finally a word about Merin Nielsen and Justice Jean Dalton of the Supreme Court of Queensland. After having sat through some of this trial, I was initially impressed with the way Justice Dalton conducted herself and her court. She is not yet 50, clearly a woman and, I would have thought, a breath of fresh air on a musty legal bench.

How disappointed I was when I not only learned that she had become the first Judge to sentence a person to a full-time jail term for assisted suicide but that she proclaimed that the act by Frank Ward of taking his life (drinking Nembutal) was an 'over-reaction' to his having had a stroke. I am dismayed at this utter lack of understanding in regards to ageing, illness and the decisions we make to live and die.

## QUANTITATIVE TEST KIT UPDATE

Following strong interest in a DIY quantitative barbiturate test process, Exit will spend the coming months acquiring the necessary equipment and refining the process before an exclusive launch for members in Sydney and Melbourne in May 2012.

Over the past 12 months, the R&D work behind establishing this test process has been beset by problems of a scientific nature. Firstly, the component chemicals required for the test are highly flammable. This led to insurmountable challenges when it comes to the distribution of the Kit as flammable substances can rarely be mailed, let alone air-mailed.



## NEW EXIT CHAPTER FOR BENDIGO

Central Victorians have struck it lucky this month with long-time Exit Member John Froehlich establishing another local chapter for Exit International, this time in the central Victorian town of Bendigo.



If you would like to contact John to learn more, or to attend his inaugural meeting, you can phone him on: 0414-361-938 or by email on: [laarsen@tpg.com.au](mailto:laarsen@tpg.com.au)

A second ongoing problem has been the relative shelf-life of the kit. In testing to date, the shelf-life was established as less than 2 weeks. Clearly this would not have been long enough for a test kit to be released from the laboratory, shipped and ultimately used by the person wishing to test the purity of their powder or liquid.

The new test process will address each of these problems as well as other issues such as legality. Launch details will be released via Chapters in Melbourne & Sydney with other cities to follow.

## VACUUM-PACKING YA POWDER

With the growing availability of sodium pentobarbital powder from scientific laboratories in China, the need for a reliable and effective long-term storage method has become necessary. As outlined in *The Peaceful Pill eHandbook*, vacuum-packing is one easy way to extend the shelf-life of your powder.

The technique was demonstrated at the Chapter Weekend by Exit's Dee Keijzer who used her kitchen vacuum food-presever to package a bag of cooking cocoa.



## 2012 INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM



Exit is pleased to announce an exciting workshop program will take place in Nth America and Europe in the second half of 2012. It is expected that workshops will be held in New Zealand and Canada in August with the USA to follow.

Workshops will also be scheduled for the UK and Scotland towards the end of the year and Exit has its first workshop on the European continent planned at this time.

In 2012, the meetings will have a particularly practical focus, enabling members to learn about the practicalities of Exit's new Nitrogen system and the DIY drug testing process.

## BMJ WARNS AGAINST TATTOOS DNS LIKELY TO BE IGNORED BY AMBOS

In recent years, Exit is aware of at least two die-hard Members who have opted to have their end-of-life wishes imprinted on their bodies. One notable example of this is Vincent Phelan of Newcastle. While Vince has been happy to share his tattoo with friends and the media alike, for others contemplating this move, a recent *British Medical Journal* report may be of interest.

In early February, the *BMJ* highlighted a study where it was found that in law a tattoo on one's chest is not a binding advance direction. So while the politics is in the right place, it might be worthwhile checking to see where the law stands in one's own jurisdiction before putting oneself under the tattooist's pen.



*Former Newcastle Chapter Coordinator Vincent Phelan with his 2009 DNR tattoo*

## AUSTRALIAN WORKSHOP TOUR 2012: WRAP UP



With a program that began in Perth on 25 January and concluded 3 weeks later in Launceston Tasmania, the Exit 2012 National Workshop Tour was an energetic and rewarding adventure that took Exit Director Dr Philip Nitschke through five states travelling over 12,000 km by plane, car and sea.

The trip generated many highlights, not least the full house of over 300 people who attended the meeting at Bundaberg's Civic Centre on Tuesday 11 January. The tour was very timely as the deregistration of Doloxene (one of the few reliably lethal drugs still able to be prescribed by doctors) as well as the trial of Merin Nielsen. Nielsen's conviction has provided another tragic case study from which Dr Nitschke draws lessons of what not to do.

## EXIT INTERNATIONAL STORE (US)

Mail Order: Box 4250 Bellingham WA 98227 USA Fax 1-360-844-1501 Phone: 1-248-809-4435



Print Edition (January 2012) - **The Peaceful Pill Handbook** (ONLY available from Exit US)  
Within US: US\$32 (includes shipping)  
Rest of World: US\$45 (includes shipping)



**Killing Me Softly (2nd Edition)**  
Within US: US\$30 (includes shipping)  
VE & the **Road to the Peaceful Pill**  
Rest of world : US\$40 (includes shipping)

## EXIT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE STORE - WWW.PEACEFULPILL.COM



**Exit Drug Test Kit**  
Price: Australia US\$65 (incl GST \$5) Rest of World: US\$80 (includes shipping)



**Exit Gas Flow Controls & Pressure Gauge**  
Ships as one unit (inc plumbers tape + tube)  
Price: Australia US\$151.70  
(US\$143 + \$8.70 shipping) (inc gst)  
Rest of World: US\$180  
(US\$140 + \$40 DHL express courier shipping)



**The Peaceful Pill eHandbook (online edition)**  
Price: US\$85 (incl 24 months of updates)  
**INSTANT ACCESS - UPDATED MONTHLY**



**Mademoiselle & the Doctor**  
**(She didn't want to turn 80)**  
Price: AUD\$40 (incl GST \$3.50 for Aust)  
(includes shipping globally)

## Join Exit International

I wish to join/ rejoin/ donate to Exit International  
(12 Months: Aust - AUD\$110 inc GST \$10; US/Canada US\$100; UK/ Irel £62/ €73) Life membership - \$1000

Please send me the paperwork to consider Exit International in my Will

First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Post/Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
eMail @ \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I am paying \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_  
Payment Options: Visa /Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card No \_\_\_\_\_  
Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_



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