

e-Deliverance

A Peaceful Death is Everybody's Right

May

Exit International

2009

Nancy's Friends Eases Angy's Nembutal Passing

When the Nancy's Friends Support Network was founded in 2004, one of its primary aims was to ensure that no one need die alone.

Named after Gold Coast voluntary euthanasia campaigner, Nancy Crick, Nancy's Friends has since become a nationwide network of trained volunteers, willing to provide information, comfort and friendship to those considering their end of life decisions.

While relatively few Nancy's Friends are ever asked to be present in the final moments, when such an important request is received it is treated with the utmost seriousness and respect.

And so was the case with Melbourne Exit member, Angy Belecchiu, who died from an overdose of Nembutal on the night of Monday 23 March. It was a Nancy's Friend who sat quietly with Angy in the hours leading up to her death. And it was that same Nancy's Friend who, as Angy lay drifting off to sleep, made her comfortable in the bed of the Mornington Peninsula motel Angy had chosen as her final resting place.



While Angy Belecchiu dearly wanted her beloved family and friends with her when she died, for legal reasons this was not possible. After all, the courts are yet to

provide an answer to that most vexing of questions - is sitting with someone as they die of their own volition assisting with their suicide?

Exit does not believe this to be the case. And we certainly believe it *should not* be the case. But we do not know. For this reason the identity of the Nancy's Friend who was with Angy when she died will not be disclosed. What is



'The Age' video of Angy discussing Nembutal

important for the Exit community to know, however, is that Angy's death was peaceful and respectful; it was, in the words of the Nancy's Friend, 'quite beautiful'.

So who was Angy Belecchiu and why should her death make a difference?

Angy joined Exit in 2007 and received a private home visit with Dr Nitschke shortly after. Some fifteen years ago, she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. More recently that cancer had spread to her bones. Before Angy gave up work, she had been employed for almost 20 years as a palliative care nurse.

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Nancy's Friends Eases Angy's Passing

Over the course of her career, Angy said she had witnessed hundreds of slow, painful declines. She had also seen many ask for help.

“People in palliative care hospitals will at some stage ask you or another nurse or a doctor ‘Please, please you know I’ve had enough’ and you can’t” she said, tears welling in her eyes ... you can’t [help them]. You can hold their hand, you can sit with them, you can talk with them ... you can’t help them, and it would be so easy.”



Philip Nitschke with Angy Belecciu on the Mornington Peninsula a few days before her death from Nembutal

As a palliative care nurse, a voluntary euthanasia activist and a mother and friend to so many, Angy Belecciu's passing was always going to be special. Not only was Angy one of the most organised people Exit Director, Philip Nitschke, said he had ever met, but she was incredibly articulate. When Angy's story appeared on the front page of *The Age* newspaper in Melbourne on Wednesday 25 March, the paper was inundated with letters to the editor and follow-up stories.



The story of Angy's choice really struck a chord. And so it should.

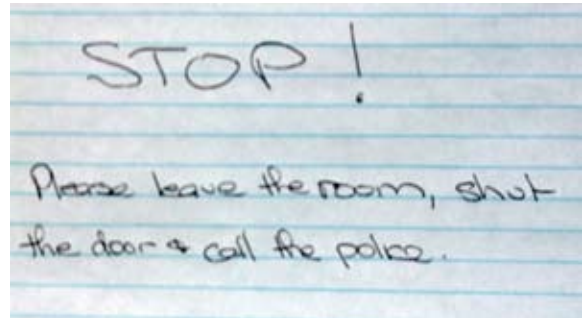
Not only was there the unique connection to Don and Iris Flounders, the couple whose trip to Mexico to buy Nembutal in January 2008 had been financed by Angy (who was by then too ill to travel), but it was her telling of why she wanted Nembutal, and the peace of mind that having her precious “elixir” gave her.

The Age reported: ‘After a harrowing trip for the elderly pair which included Flounders falling and breaking several ribs, Belecciu received her elixir in March last year. The bottle was wrapped in pretty paper and had a bow tied around it. “I don’t think I’ve ever had a gift that was so precious. Once I had my Nembutal I was fine, the weight was gone, my fear was gone.” But shortly after hiding their bottles away from their homes, the

publicity stunt (both had appeared on Channel 7 news) prompted a Federal Police raid. The police never found the Nembutal, and according to Flounders and Belecciu, their hearts did not seem to be in the job. “They were very good and even made me a cup of tea” she said. “I was shaking and I was crying, saying ‘This is not fair, what are you doing?’ But they were very good, they were respectful.”

‘On the Friday before her death, Angy told *The Age* that she was “99.9999 per cent” certain her time had come. She said she was tired and did not feel the need to be brave any more. She said she was not committing suicide, but rather euthanasia, and she wanted to tell her story to inform people of the issues at stake.

‘Angy was so prepared that she had paid her taxes; organised her funeral, written letters to eight special people and prepared a note for the “poor bugger” who would investigate why she had not checked out. “I’ve written a note which says ‘Stop!’ really big. It says ‘Stop! please turn around, shut the door and call the police’”.’



The note that Angy Belecciu left in the motel room where she died. The note was to alert room staff of her death.

As it turns out, Dr Nitschke delivered the news of Angy's death to *The Age*. ‘He said he had received a final text message from her which read “All is good. Amazed at the peace I feel.” Dr Nitschke had also received a call on the Monday night from the Nancy's Friend who had stayed with Angy. A debrief session for the Nancy's Friend was held the following evening but, as she herself pointed out, it wasn't really necessary. Of Angy's death, the Nancy's Friend said simply it had been a privilege and an honour to be with this wonderful woman at the time of her choosing.

The full story ‘Angy's Choice’ can be found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/angies-choice-20090324-98yu.html>

The Angy's Choice video can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3CrO3B5m7s>

Oxford Union Society Pressured to Drop Dr Philip Nitschke from Debate

In an almost unprecedented act of censorship the Oxford Union has retracted an invitation to Dr Philip Nitschke, to take part in the 14 May debate 'This House should Legalise Euthanasia.'

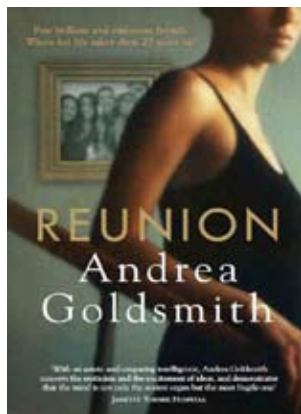
On 20 March, Philip was very pleased to receive an invitation from Union President, Corey Dixon. The letter stated:

"Our members would be delighted to welcome the founder of an organisation like Exit International to address our chamber. As someone who has campaigned for the legalisation of assisted suicide, assisted patients in ending their own lives, and had a book on the subject banned by the Australian censorship, you are uniquely placed to provide a considered and incisive contribution to our debate. Our members would be fascinated to hear your thoughts and experiences." Philip duly accepted the invitation.

We were very surprised when, five days later, an email arrived stating "I am afraid that we have

Melbourne Exit Member Publishes 6th Novel

Acclaimed Melbourne writer, and longtime Exit member, Andrea Goldsmith, has released her 6th novel, *Reunion*, published by Harper Collins imprint, Fourth Estate.



As many in the Exit community will be aware, Andrea's last book, *The Prosperous Thief*, was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin award.

In *Reunion*, Andrea examines the themes of love, power, friendship and betrayal as five friends are reunited, for the first time in 20 years. But it is the diagnosis of one of the group with 'semantic dementia' that brings the novel face to face with Exit's own work in voluntary euthanasia.

Andrea Goldsmith conveys the eroticism and the excitement of ideas, and demonstrates that the mind is not only the sexiest organ but the most fragile. Janette Turner Hospital

encountered something of a problem as we have had great difficulty getting other speakers to agree to speak along side Dr. Nitschke feeling that his views are too far divorced from their own. It is therefore with sadness that we feel obliged to retract our invitation ..."



Of course, at the time Exit wondered who these other speakers were. Was it the church? Was it Right to Life UK? It was not until the news wire AAP reported that Exit learned that the speakers to object were fellow VE supporters Dr Michael Irwin (formerly a head of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies and a 'Lesley Close' (a person entirely unknown to Exit).

While Dr Irwin has since denied the allegation that it was he who refused to speak alongside Philip, the media (and Wikipedia) continue to report his protestations. Needless to say, Exit remains dismayed at the Machiavellian politics which now seem to infest the VE movement globally; especially with individuals struggling to maintain their relevance in the future VE debate.

Exit Director Addresses National Thoracic Physicians Conference

Meeting in the Northern Territory at the newly-completed Darwin Convention Centre, the Australian and New Zealand Society of Thoracic Physicians invited Exit Director, Dr Philip Nitschke, to provide one of four keynote addresses over the week-long scientific meeting.



Philip Nitschke

Dr Nitschke's address to the audience of 500 included a discussion of helium and hypoxia as a method to bring about a peaceful death. Philip would like to thank the President of the Society, Professor Christine Jenkins (and the organising committee), for their kind invitation to speak.

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contact@exitinternational.net

Wikileaks.org



In early March this year, Communications Minister Senator Stephen Conroy's secret blacklist of soon-to-be banned websites was leaked by europe-based free speech website, *Wikileaks.org*.

To Exit's surprise, we found that not only was *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* website (www.peacefulpill.com) included on the government's list of 'revolting and abhorrent' (the Minister's words) sites but that three of Exit's Youtube.com videos were also included. Two of these videos were made by retired, Melbourne nurse educator Betty Peters. 'The Single Shot' video was also included on the list.

While it is not yet clear whether this legislation will be passed in the Senate, what is clear is that older Australians' access to reliable, accurate end of life information is under threat. Exit is currently planning a delegation of Victorian Exit members to Senator Conroy's office. If you would like to join us, please contact the Melbourne Exit office. In numbers we hope to put an end to the 'big brother' attitude of the Rudd government when it comes to voluntary euthanasia.



Sandringham Secondary Students Interview Exit for Bayside Youth Documentary Project

When Exit Director, Philip Nitschke, was recently in Melbourne he caught up with Year 9 student film maker Benny Griffiths and his crew. Benny approached Exit in the course of his team's plans to enter the Bayside Youth Documentary Project which forms part of the 2009 Bayside Film Festival.

In 2008, over 300 young people took part in the project whose main aim is to 'facili-



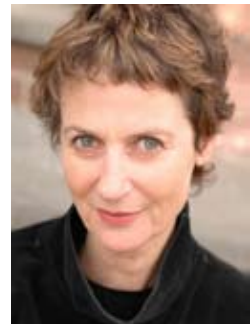
Philip Nitschke with the Sandringham Secondary College students at the Exit office in Melbourne

Join the Club!

The New Exit Book Club that is!!

This month heralds the establishment of the Exit Book Club, where members can come together for coffee and cake and a good chat over a prescribed book club read.

Once a quarter beginning in May, Exit will feature in *Deliverance* a chosen book. Members will then have the following month or two to read the nominated book with a view to attending a specially scheduled book club meeting in their local area.



Andrea Goldsmith

Books chosen will be relevant to the broad theme of end of life choices. Members' suggestions are of course very welcome.

The first book for our Book Club will be Andrea Goldsmith's new novel, *Reunion*. Exit is honoured to have Andrea reading from *Reunion*, discussing her new novel with us and of course signing copies. **The inaugural Exit Book Club meeting will be held at the Hawthorn Library on Tuesday 26 May (at the Melb Chapter Mtg) at 9.30am.**

**** Free event - All welcome ****

If you would like to start a book club in your local chapter area, please register your interest with your local chapter coordinator who will then work with Exit to get a local club up and running. A Sydney Book Club event with Andrea Goldsmith will be held mid year. Watch the June edition of *Deliverance* for details.

tate the telling of local stories by local voices.' The students work in small crews to develop 5-minute documentaries exploring their own topics.

Benny and his team hope their film will be selected for a Festival screening at Palace Brighton cinemas during the Festival (15 - 18 July 2009). Exit wishes Benny and the crew the best of luck with their entry.



Ever wondered how Exit Director, Philip Nitschke, spends his time when not fronting workshops?

Ever wondered where in Australia (or the world)

Philip is at any one time?

The new networking website Twitter.com allows Exit to keep you posted about Philip's day-to-day activities and movements. Twitter posts must be only a few lines long, so this is quick fire way to stay up to date.

If you'd like to follow Philip on Twitter.com:

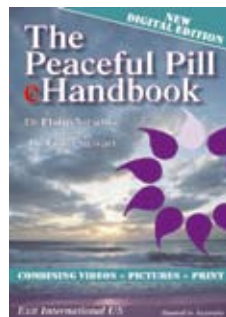
1. Go to www.twitter.com
2. Click on green 'Get Started - Join' button
3. Once you confirm your account, click on:
4. 'Find People' (top menu bar)
5. Enter 'Philip Nitschke' into text box
6. You will be taken to Philip's latest post. Click on 'Follow'

Enjoy & stay connected for free to Exit day by day!

Peaceful Pill eHandbook April 2009 Update

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

- Changes to the availability of Nembutal in Nuevo Progreso, Juarez, Del Rio & Reynosa
- Changes to Nembutal over the Internet



The video *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* is published by Exit International US Ltd can be purchased from www.peacefulpill.com.

Subscribers to the online video edition receive 24 months of updates included in the purchase price of US\$75. (Note - Those purchasing the book in Australia may be in breach of the *Suicide Related Material Offences Act*).

Exit members who already have a copy of the initial print edition of *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* (the import of this book is a possible breach of the Australian *Customs Act*) are entitled to an AUD\$25 cash-back on purchasing the online edition. Members should mail proof of purchase to the Exit office in Darwin and a cheque will be sent to you (overseas purchasers will receive a refund using Paypal).

The past few weeks have been a mixed bag for Exit, & for me personally. While I have been very pleased that the activities of our organisation have continued to make an impact in the international media, it has been rather dismaying to witness the rather sordid jockeying for position which now characterises the actions of some individuals within the global right-to-die movement.

But firstly to *Time*. In the 13 April edition of this magazine was an article titled: 'Foolproofing Suicide with Euthanasia Test Kits.' The article examined the new Exit Laboratory's first & most important project; the development of a test kit for those people lucky enough to have acquired veterinary Nembutal or, who have, old barbiturate-based prescription drugs. This was very pleasing.

Other significant recent international media included a series of articles in *The Straits Times* in Singapore. Not only did this prominent Asian paper cover Angy Belecciu's death (interviewing Angy at length), but they have continued to take an interest in our activities in their part of the world; in particular reporting on our forthcoming public meeting in Singapore. Securing government permission & the necessary permits to hold a meeting has been a lesson in and of itself. But, unlike the Oxford Union, it seems the Singapore government does not object to adults being able to discuss the issue of VE legislation.

And this brings me to the disappointments of the month. Not only did Exit lose the wonderfully lucid and thought-provoking Angy Belecciu, but we have continued to be vilified within the VE movement. As someone who has been involved in numerous social causes over my 60 years I am well aware of the politics that can develop within a non-profit sector such as VE.

What did surprised me regarding the pressure brought to bear on the Oxford Union to un-invite me from their forthcoming debate on VE, was not the preparedness of the Union to censor, but rather that the other individuals involved in the debate felt so threatened by what are the clear future trends of the VE movement.

While the future of VE may, one day, lie with a legislative solution, this will not deter future generations from demanding to know their end of life choices. Denying basic end of life information to rational adults is an untenable position. This is even more so given the proliferation of new forms of knowledge made possible by the world wide web.

From a philosophical standpoint, we all need to engage in the question of how information can be provided to those who seek it in the best and most responsible ways. As I see it, that is the future challenge of VE.

Philip Nitschke



Exit Store

WBC		R	
WBC-G		KMS	
B		DVD	
C		OTHER	

Office Use Only

I want to join/ rejoin/ donate to Exit International

(The average donation to Exit is A\$100-150 - includes a membership fee of \$55 incl GST)

I would like to make a bequest to Exit (please send me a bequest form)

* **The Peaceful Pill eHandbook (online video edition)**

- available at www.peacefulpill.com - US\$75 (includes 24 months of updates)



* **The Peaceful Pill Handbook (print edition) (banned in Australia)**

- available from Exit International US Ltd, PO Box 300396, Waterford MI 48330 USA
- US\$40 (includes postage worldwide) or from www.peacefulpill.com

Note - the import/ download of this book in Australia may be illegal.

(Use this form to mail order the PPH. Credit Card payments ONLY)

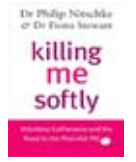
* **Killing Me Softly VE & the Road to the Peaceful Pill**

(by Drs Philip Nitschke & Fiona Stewart)

(International orders, please order online at exitinternational.net)

A\$44.30

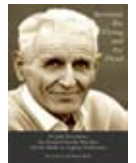
(includes postage within Australia)



* **Between the Dying & the Dead - Dr Jack Kevorkian, the Assisted Suicide Machine & the Battle to Legalise Euthanasia** (by Neal Nicol & Harry Wylie)

A\$50

(includes postage worldwide)



* **Mademoiselle & the Doctor DVD**

(pal & NTSC formats)

A\$38.50

(includes postage worldwide)



Contact Details

First Name(s).....

Last Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

eMail

Age.....

Telephone.....

Giving Options

I am giving \$

on (today's date).....

Visa

Mastercard

Cheque
AUD\$ ONLY

Credit Card No.....

Name on Card.....

Signature.....

Expiry Date...../.....

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Chapter Meeting Dates - May / June 2009

ADELAIDE: Friday 15 May.
Contact Julia on 8390-1822
or Janine on 8431-1668.



Julia in Adelaide

BENDIGO/CASTLE-MAINE: Friday, 1 May at 12 noon: Kindergarten room - Uniting Church, Lyttleton St, Castlemaine. BYO lunch. Tea/ coffee provided. Contact Dorothy 5442-9793 or Grace 5472-1128.



Angelika in Brisbane

BRISBANE: Saturday 30 May at 10am. Contact Angelika on 0431-275-840.

CAIRNS: Saturday, 23 May at 11am. Contact John on 0427-486-402 .



John in Cairns

CANBERRA: Friday, 8 May at 12.30pm: Griffin Centre. Contact David, Tony or Jacqueline on 0401-315-631.

CENTRAL COAST: Saturday 30 May at 1.30pm: Craft Room, Kincumber Community Centre. Contact Bettina on 4369-4008.



David in Canberra

FORSTER: Thursday, 28 May at 1pm: Tuncurry Bowls Club. Contact Leslie on 02-6554-5942

DUNEDIN: Sunday 17 May, 2pm: 1st floor, Public Library, Dunedin. Contact Paula on 03-471-9955.



Bettina on the Central Coast

DORRIGO: Sunday, 31 May at 3pm: CWA Rooms. Contact Al on 02-6657-2355.



Al in Dorriggo

MELBOURNE: Tuesday 26 May at 9.30am: Hawthorn Library. Contact Rob on 0423-305-788.

NEWCASTLE: Monday, 4 May at 10.30am: Trades Hall. Contact Vincent on 02-4945-1916. June meeting: 1 June.



Rob in Melbourne

NORTHERN RIVERS: Thursday, 25 June at 10am: Ballina CWA Hall. Contact Jude on 02-6672-3321.

PERTH: Monday 8 June at 1pm: Wembley Community Centre, 40 Alexander St, Wembly. Contact Carol on 0429-039-167.



Vince in Newcastle

SYDNEY: Friday 12 June at 10:30: Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood. Contact Madeleine on 0432-611-695.

TOOWOOMBA: Tuesday, 5 May 1pm: Dr Price Meeting Room. Contact Elaine on 07-5534-7487.



Jude in Nth Rivers

TOWNSVILLE: Wednesday 17 June. Contact Syd & Eric on 07-4729-0275.



Mad in Sydney

ExiTutorials May - August 2009

Webinar - Monday 4 May 2009 (10am GMT - UK time) (See Exit website for details)

Bournemouth - Tuesday 5 May: 10am - 1pm
Hamilton Hall, 1 Carysfort Rd, Bournemouth

Brighton - Wednesday 6 May: 1 - 4pm
Brighthelm Church & Community Centre,
North Rd, Brighton (*public meeting only*)

Stroud - Friday 8 May: 10am - 1pm
The Space, Lansdown, Stroud Gloucestershire

Glasgow - Saturday
9 May: 1 - 4pm
Glasgow Unitarian
Church, 72 Berkeley St, Glasgow

Singapore -
Wednesday 13 May:
6 - 7.30pm
National Arts Council, National Library
Building (Function
Room 1, Drama
Centre), 100 Victoria St, Singapore
(*public meeting only*)



Intense audience interest was shown at the March ExiTutorial held in Melbourne

Brisbane - Saturday 23 May: 1pm
Toowoong Senior Citizens Club, 9 Maryvale St, Toowoong

Rockhampton - Tuesday 26 May: 10am
Walter Reid Cultural Centre, Rockhampton Regional Council

Mackay - Thurs 28 May: 1pm
Sth West Mackay Neighbourhood Ctr, Cnr Pompey & Clements St, Sth Mackay

Townsville - Saturday 30 May: 1pm
Annandale Community Ctr, Annandale Shopping Ctr, 607-101 McArthur Dve

June Dates

Cairns - Monday 1 June: 10am Cairns City Library, 151 Abbott St

Bundaberg - Thursday 4 June: 10am
Bundaberg Civic Centre, Bundaberg

Central Coast - Wednesday 10 June: 10am
Kincumber & District Neighbourhood Centre,
1/20 Kincumber St, Kincumber.

Newcastle - Saturday 13 June: 1pm
Trades Hall, 406 King St, Newcastle

Bowral - Tuesday 16 June: 1pm
Bowral Memorial Hall, Bendooley St

Canberra - Friday 19 June: 1pm
Griffin Centre, Genge St, City

Gold Coast - Tuesday 23 June: 10am
Civic Centre, Brett St, Tweed Heads

Hervey Bay - Thursday 25 June: 1pm
QCWA Hall, 7 Torquay Rd, Pialba

Sunshine Coast
- Saturday 27
June: 10.30am The
Annexe, Bicentennial Ctr, Bicentennial Dve, Sunshine Beach

Bribie Island
- Monday 29 June:
10am RSL, 99 Toorbul St, Bongaree

July Dates

Lismore - Wed 1 July: 1pm
Lismore Sports Club, 202 Oliver Ave,
Goonellabah

Coffs Harbour - Friday 3 July: 1pm
Cavanbah Hall, 191 High St, Coffs Harbour

Katoomba - Monday 20 July: 1pm
Masonic Lodge, Cnr Station St & Great
Western Hwy, Katoomba

Auckland - Wednesday 22 July: 9am
Ferndale House, 830 New North Rd, Mt Albert

Wellington - Friday 24 July: 9am
St Johns in the City, Cnr Willis & Dixon Sts

Nelson - Saturday 25 July: 10am
Melrose House, 26 Brougham St, Nelson

Dunedin - Wednesday 29 July: 1pm
Cargills Hotel, 678 George St, Dunedin

Hobart - Friday 31 July: 10am
Hobart Adult Education Ctr, 32 Church St,
North Hobart

Adelaide - Monday 3 August: 1pm, Burnside
Community Ctr, 401 Greenhill Rd, Tasmore