



## *Deliverance Newsserver*

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### **1. Living need help with the dying**

Herald Sun  
THU 23 NOV 2006,  
Bettina Arndt

HOW people die remains in the memories of those who live on.  
How true are these words from Dame Cicely Saunders, the founder of the palliative care movement.

But sadly for many of us, those memories are filled with horror and shame.  
Two months ago I wrote about my never-ending regret that I was unable to prevent the undignified torment my mother experienced in her last two weeks of life.

Since then letters have come in from all over the country showing my experience is all too common.  
On letter read: "After many years of fighting cancer, my mother became hospitalised as my father and I were no longer able to control her unrelenting pain.

"What had been a good life ended with a slow, painful, undignified death and that to me is very wrong.  
"My mother couldn't keep food down and lost so much weight I remember her saying to me, 'I can't stand this pain, I have had enough, I want to die.'  
"My final memory of Mum is of a fragile, thin women looking like a prison camp victim and unfortunately that memory is the one that remains in my mind."

Another letter read: "My father, an active and intelligent man, had a massive stroke and lingered for four years . . . I feel I let him down in not taking matters into my own hands -- legal or illegal."

Letter after letter spoke of parents pleading for a quick death, the guilt of having been unable to help, the trauma of seeing loved ones suffering unnecessarily.  
Many people ask how laws exist that make cruelty to animals a crime, yet current laws condemn humans to prolonged torment.

The letters blow out of the water the lie that we don't need voluntary euthanasia, that palliative care can solve the problem.

A South Australian study shows palliative care failed to relieve pain in a quarter of patients with terminal cancer, and failed to help a third who had difficulty breathing and 57 per cent of those with nausea and vomiting.

A STUDY by a top British palliative care expert finds up to a quarter of patients report unacceptable severe pain.

Yes, many patients are helped to achieve a peaceful death but this still leaves large numbers spending their final days in pain, struggling to breathe, suffering constipation, nausea, sleeplessness, with their families forced to witness this horrible end.

Doctors are forced under laws to lie, to say they can simply offer "terminal sedation" when they are actually helping a patient to die by slowly increasing the amount of pain-killing drugs until death occurs.

This is slow euthanasia, but doctors can't afford to admit it.

Even armed with a parent's living will, families are in the horrible position of hoping doctors are doing what they can, wondering if anything is being done to hasten what can be weeks of torment but not daring to ask.

The situation is absurd and obscene. Most people in our community want laws to change to allow legal support for assisted suicide.

Join Exit International ([www.exitinternational.net](http://www.exitinternational.net)) or Dying with Dignity ([www.dwdv.org.au](http://www.dwdv.org.au)) and use our numbers to confront the lies that prop up the current system and find a better way.

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Section: ED

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## **2. 'Mercy killing' charges dropped**

BBC

Wednesday, 22 November 2006,

Birmingham Mail columnist Maureen Messent

Maureen Messent made the claims in a Birmingham Mail article

Charges against a woman who claimed she had helped her aunt die 30 years ago in a "mercy killing" have been dropped.

Journalist Maureen Messent, 67, of Birmingham, wrote in an article that she gave a fatal overdose of morphine to Eileen O'Sullivan in Devon.

The Crown Prosecution Service has now withdrawn a charge of wasting police time after receiving medical evidence from the defence.

Inquiries showed Ms Messent was nowhere near her aunt at the time of her death.

Poor health

Newspaper records showed she was covering a story in the West Midlands.

The case was first listed at Torbay Magistrates' Court and transferred to Birmingham Magistrates' Court because Ms Messent was too ill to travel to Devon.

Because of her poor health she did not then appear in court in Birmingham either.

Ms Messent, of Balsall Heath, had been charged with making false reports in a newspaper article and radio interview.

In an article for the Birmingham Mail in February she wrote that she had killed her terminally ill aunt, Eileen O'Sullivan, in the late 1960s while living in Devon.

She said she had decided to reveal the circumstances surrounding the death because of potential changes in the laws on euthanasia. The Crown Prosecution Service later confirmed that her aunt had died from natural causes.

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### 3. Australische arts Philip Nitschke ziet wettelijke euthanasieregeling gedwarsboemd door overheid

Reformatorisch Dagblad zaterdag  
17 november 2006  
PAGINA

"Vrije keuze ligt straks in nachtkastje"

Prolifers in Australië hoeven zich nog geen zorgen te maken over euthanasie. Zowel op federaal als op deelstaatniveau sluit wetgeving actieve euthanasie uit. Een van de vurigste en bekendste voorvechters van euthanasie in Australië, dr. Philip Nitschke, klaagt steen en been over het „vijandelijke” overheidsbeleid. Tegelijkertijd zoekt Nitschke alternatieve wegen. „Wij gaan ervoor zorgen dat mensen hun vrije keuze in hun nachtkastje hebben liggen.”  
Ab Jansen

Alle exemplaren van zijn boek –met praktische adviezen over de manier waarop mensen een eind aan hun leven kunnen maken– zijn onlangs op een Australische luchthaven in beslag genomen. „We hadden ze in het buitenland laten drukken, maar mogen ze in Australië niet verspreiden.” Voor Nitschke is dit het zoveelste bewijs dat de Australische regering hem de oorlog heeft verklaard. „De conservatieve regering van premier Howard maakt het ons steeds lastiger. En ook de zeven deelstaatregeringen weigeren mee te werken aan een wettelijke regeling.” Nitschke noemt dit „allemaal Labourkabinetten die sterk worden beïnvloed door christelijke lobbygroepen en door de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk.”

Omslag

Dat was tien jaar geleden wel anders. Toen stond Nitschke aan de wieg van de eerste liberale euthanasiewet van Australië, die van kracht werd in zijn thuisstaat, de Northern Territories. „Toen waren we als land even leidinggevend in de wereld, nu lopen we voorop als het gaat om het terugdraaien van de euthanasiemogelijkheden.” Het meest recente voorbeeld van die omslag dateert van eerder dit jaar. Toen

nam het Australische federale parlement de Suicide Material Amendment Bill aan. „Die maakt het strafbaar om via internet of de telefoon methoden voor het beëindigen van het leven te verspreiden.

Het argument was dat kwetsbare tieners moeten worden beschermd tegen gevaarlijke informatie op internet.”

Nitschke ziet in de wet een succesvolle poging om te voorkomen dat mensen „goede informatie” over euthanasie kunnen vinden.

Zijn pro-euthanasiepartij werd een mislukking. Aanhangers van pro life zien daarin een bewijs dat de Australische bevolking niet zit te wachten op legalisering van euthanasie. Nitschke zelf ziet dat anders. „We hadden wel 9 procent van de stemmen. Om als zelfstandig kandidaat zo veel stemmen te krijgen, dat is helemaal niet slecht. Verder kregen we voor de verkiezingen meer donaties voor onze campagne dan enige andere individuele kandidaat.”

Toch is Nitschke niet van plan om legalisering van euthanasie langs die weg te realiseren. „Ik heb er te veel tijd en geld aan verspild. Partijen blijken niets te voelen voor mijn standpunten, ze zijn te bang voor de georganiseerde invloed van godsdienstige lobbygroepen in Australië. Wij vinden het best, we doen het voortaan zelf wel. Wij gaan ervoor zorgen dat onze vrije keuze in ons nachtkastje ligt.”

#### Euthanasiepil

Nitschke heeft zijn zinnen gezet op de euthanasiepil, de "peacefull pill" zoals hij hem zelf noemt. „Mensen moeten hem zelf maken, want als ik dat voor hen doe en de pil bij hen afl ever, ben ik strafbaar.” Die productie in eigen huis heeft tot gevolg dat mensen die euthanasie willen niet meer zijn geïnteresseerd in wetgeving die actieve euthanasie toestaat, weet Nitschke. „Ze zitten ook niet te wachten op eindeloze procedures om toestemming te krijgen van de ene na de andere arts – ze willen hun eigen middelen in hun nachtkastje hebben liggen.”

Nitschke zegt verzoeken van „veel mensen” te krijgen die graag met een groep willen meedoen met het maken van de pillen. „Maar je kunt zoiets niet in vijf minuten in elkaar zetten. De eerste groep van twintig mensen heeft er nu twee jaar opzitten en allerlei hobbels weggenomen. Ze hopen dat de procedure steeds eenvoudiger wordt naarmate

meer mensen met de ingrediënten aan de slag gaan.”

Met de pil worden andere door Nitschke bedachte apparaten overbodig. De "euthanasiecomputer" was dat al –daarmee konden mensen met een druk op de knop zichzelf een dodelijke injectie laten toedienen–, maar ook de plastic zak met dodelijk gas is niet langer populair. „Ik moet iets eenvoudig kunnen pakken en opdrinken of slikken, zeggen mensen tegen me. Vreedzaam en betrouwbaar, daar draait het bij hen om. En dat is die pil zeker.”

Geen kanker

Nitschke werd in 2002 keihard aangevallen door de prolifebeweging na de dood van de 69-jarige Nancy Crick. Na haar dood werd openbaar dat ze geen kanker had en dus ten onrechte om euthanasie had gevraagd.

„Niet waar”, zegt Nitschke. „Een levensbedreigend kankergezwel was bij

haar verwijderd, maar de gevolgen van die ingreep waren zo groot, dat haar leven voor haar geen waarde meer had. Doorslaggevend was niet wel of niet ziek, maar de kwaliteit van leven. Dat zeggen wij ook: lijden is lijden, waardoor dat ook wordt veroorzaakt.”

Nederland is voor Nitschke intussen een baken dat richting geeft. „Ten aanzien van tal van sociale kwesties hebben jullie Nederlanders een pragmatische en progressieve visie ontwikkeld. Euthanasie is daarvan een belangrijke. Veel Australiërs verwachten van Nederland morele leiding. Ze laten zich inspireren door wat ze bij jullie zien. We kunnen slechts jaloers zijn op wat jullie hebben bereikt. Voor ons is dat onmogelijk. Wij moeten daarom praktisch te werk gaan. Zicht op wettelijke aanpassing is er niet.”

FOTO

Australische burgers zitten niet te wachten op een wettelijke regeling van euthanasie, stellen prolifeorganisaties. Philip

Nitschke,

fervent voorstander van zo'n regeling, ontkent dat. Volgens hem worden de autoriteiten sterk beïnvloed door het profifestandpunt van christelijke lobbygroepen. Foto ANP  
NITSCHKE...euthanasiepil...

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#### 4. Push for euthanasia

WED 22 NOV 2006,  
Berwick Pakenham Leader  
By Glenn Osborne

MOST Casey and Cardinia election candidates would support legislation changes to Victoria's euthanasia laws.

Support group Dying With Dignity Victoria polled candidates and asked if they would support the change to give terminally ill people the legal right to seek and receive medical assistance to end their lives.

However, Gembrook Labor MP Tammy Lobato said she would not answer hypotheticals. "There are no proposals to change legislation. End-of-life issues are covered by the Medical Treatment Act, which already allows a competent person to refuse medical treatment for a current condition, as well as to nominate an agent to make medical decisions on their behalf should they ever become unable to make such decisions for themselves," she said.

"If, at some future time, there were any proposals to change the legislation I would need to consider them in detail on their merit. It's not possible to state support or opposition for something that is totally hypothetical."

Gembrook candidate Gordon Watson of the Greens said he would support the change, while there was qualified support from Liberal Simon Wildes and People Power's Robyn Allcock.

Dying With Dignity Victoria vice-president Neil Francis said more than 150 of about 400 candidates had expressed their written support for the idea about 40 per cent. In the Upper House, the Green's Louis Delacretaz and Labor candidates Glenyys Romannes would support the plan, while there was qualified support from Labor's Johan Scheffer and the Nationals' Peter Hall.

Mr Francis said nearly three-quarters of Australians believed terminally ill people should have the right to seek medical help to end their lives.

He said the group would ask for a conscience vote in the new parliament.

Section: NEWS

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## **5. Court Rules for Kentucky on Executions**

New York Times  
By ADAM LIPTAK  
November 23, 2006

While conceding that the chemicals used to execute death row inmates in Kentucky might cause needless pain, the state's Supreme Court ruled yesterday that using them did not violate the Constitution's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment.

"Conflicting medical testimony prevents us from stating categorically that a prisoner feels no pain," Justice Donald C. Wintersheimer wrote for the unanimous court. "The prohibition is against cruel and unusual punishment and does not require a complete absence of pain."

The lawyers for the two inmates who brought the challenge, like lawyers in scores of other cases around the country, had presented evidence that the three chemicals used in lethal injections had the potential to produce excruciating pain.

Thirty-seven states and the federal government execute condemned prisoners by injection. A federal judge in California will soon decide a challenge to that state's lethal injection protocol, and Deborah W. Denno, a Fordham law professor and expert on execution methods, said similar litigation was pending in nearly all those states.

The states' protocols vary slightly, but almost all call for a series of three chemicals. The first is a barbiturate meant to render the inmate unconscious. The second is a paralyzing agent that makes the inmate unable to speak, move or breathe. The third is potassium chloride, which stops the heart.

Veterinarians, by contrast, use a single large dose of barbiturate to euthanize animals.

Lawyers for the Kentucky inmates, Ralph Baze and Thomas C. Bowling, relied on interpretation of autopsy records from the last execution in the state, that of Edward L. Harper in 1999. The lawyers said the drug meant to make Mr. Harper unconscious had not worked, meaning the two other drugs had subjected him first to smothering and then to searing pain while he was awake but unable to cry out.

But the justices' decision yesterday said Corrections Department personnel present at Mr. Harper's execution disputed that he had suffered.

"Harper went to sleep within 15 seconds to one minute from the moment that the warden began the execution," Justice Wintersheimer wrote, "and never moved or exhibited any pain whatsoever subsequent to losing consciousness."

Professor Denno, who testified on behalf of the inmates, said the court's opinion was flawed. She said it did cite the correct constitutional standard, which bars punishments that create a substantial risk of wanton and unnecessary infliction of pain.

But because the decision, in an apparent allusion to veterinary euthanasia, acknowledged that "there are other drugs which may further assure the condemned person feels no pain," the court's own reasoning should have required a contrary ruling, she said.

In a statement, Attorney General Greg D. Stumbo said he was pleased that the executions could now proceed.

"We have moved the process forward," Mr. Stumbo said, "and at the appropriate time will seek a warrant for execution from the governor."

David M. Barron, a lawyer for the inmates, said the justices had failed to address his clients' claims in detail. He said he would seek reconsideration and, if necessary, review by the United States Supreme Court.

END

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