



## PRESS RELEASE

# Toronto Public Library Censors Euthanasia Meeting

Toronto Public Library has become the latest Canadian institution to refuse a booking from Australian Voluntary Euthanasia advocacy group, Exit International, to hold a meeting at its premises.

This decision follows the lead of the Vancouver Public Library in November 2009 in also refusing the group's attempt to book a meeting.

In an email to Exit on 23 July 2010, Toronto Library Divisional Support Manager, Heather Mathis, told Exit that the proposed Safe Suicide Information Workshop would be 'contrary to the law or the Library's Rules of Conduct'.

'The Library has sought legal counsel on the legality of the proposed Program content and we regret that we are not able to accept your booking as requested' Ms Mathis wrote.

However, according to Philip Nitschke PhD MD, the Founder of Exit International – the booking refusal amounts to an attempt to gag open debate about the “cutting edge social issue that is assisted suicide.”

Speaking from Sydney, Dr Nitschke said “our meetings are not about encouraging suicide. Rather they are about providing a safe space for discussion for Seniors and those ill with no hope of recovery.

According to Jason Gratl, Vice President at the BC Civil Liberties Association, “nobody at Exit International is promoting or encouraging suicide. Open and public discussions about death and dignified means of dying may make us squeamish, but they are not unlawful.”

Dr Philip Nitschke has added: ‘with knowledge about their end of life choices, people stop worrying and get on with living their final days. Denying folk the right to discuss Assisted Suicide and Safe Suicide is not only cruel, it is uncivilized.

“Given the failure earlier this year of Francine Lalonde’s legislative proposals, I would have thought Canada could do better than own a statistic that shows the elderly chose hanging as the most common method of suicide. Censoring discussion by refusing to lease venues makes a mockery of civil liberties” he said.

### **About Dr Philip Nitschke**

In 1996, Philip Nitschke became the first physician in the world to administer a legal, lethal voluntary injection under Australia’s *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*. The law lasted 9 months before being overturned in the Federal Parliament.

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