



PRESS RELEASE

Wylie Euthanasia Case Court Decision Shock for Alzheimer's Disease Sufferers and Carers

Exit International Director, Dr Philip Nitschke said today that the jury decision in the trial of Caren Jennings and Shirley Justins for the Murder/ Assisted Suicide of Graeme Wylie will send shock waves through the community.

Caren Jennings was today found guilty of assisting in the man slaughter of Graeme Wylie. Mr Wylie's partner of 18 years, Shirley Justins, was found guilty of his manslaughter.

The prosecution did not dispute the fact that Graeme Wylie had, for years, made it clear to those around him that he wanted to die rather than being kept alive with dementia. The prosecution argued that he has "missed the window of opportunity" as his Alzheimer's progressed, and that those who helped him achieve his wish by providing him with the euthanasia drug Nembutal from Mexico had carried out the act of murder.

Dr Nitschke, who has watched the trial for its 7 week duration and gave evidence as a Crown witness – Dr Nitschke consulted Mr Wylie on behalf of Swiss assisted suicide organisation Dignitas and assessed him as suitable for an assisted suicide - was shocked by the decision.

"This decision means that elderly Australian will now take their lives that bit earlier than would otherwise be the case, simply to protect those they love from this type of prosecution.

"At Exit International, we will now be advising our members NOT to undertake medical testing for Alzheimer's disease if they think they may wish to end their lives in the future. Test results could be used (as they were in this case) to make out a murder case against those who love you enough to want to help you to have the choice of a peaceful death. Like many Alzheimer's sufferers Mr Wylie did not want to be institutionalised nor have his partner witness his slow mental decline. Yet the court has sent a strong message that any evidence of a decline in mental function could have serious implications for those involved in care."

Caren Jennings, 75 years, is terminally ill with breast cancer and is now facing her last days in prison.