

Feb-May
2022

exit
international

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SAVE THE DATE

13 April 2022

Sarco goes to Poland
Play: 'Right to Choose'
Nowry Theatre, Poznan, PL

Thursday 12 May 2022

Member Coffee & Chat
with Philip Nitschke
See website for details

Annah Faulkner

A Literary Suicide Note & Farewell

'In planning to take my life, I have weighed five things: friends, conscience, circumstances, will and wish'.

'Taking my own life will cause great distress to those who love me, and I truly and deeply regret that. But I cannot live solely for purpose of protecting other's feelings'.

Shortly before she died in March at her home in Tasmania (age 72), award-winning writer, Annah Faulkner (The Beloved) who was also an Exit Member penned her final work of non-fiction: a moving, poignant and deeply insightful suicide note titled 'An Open Letter to Australia and the World'.

In her letter, Annah Faulkner called for Nembutal to be legalised. She was not the first Exit member to do this, nor will she be the last. But she reasoned: 'Despite suicide being legal in Australia,

our authoritarian overlords will do everything possible to deny the quest for a peaceful death, forcing him or her into a grubby and brutal exit'.

Annah Faulkner did not have a brutal exit, but she may have had a grubby one depending on your point of view. Annah died with a plastic bag on her head and a cylinder of Nitrogen by her side. She died alone.

Being a highly organised woman, she advised Exit's Tasmanian coordinator, Kay Scurr that she would leave the AC on, just in case there was a heat wave and so her body would be well-preserved when she was found. Annah wanted no mess.

But this is not really how Annah wanted to go. She lamented the difficulty of not being able to get the best euthanasia drug, Nembutal.

Cont p.2

ANNAH FAULKNER

AWARD WINNING WRITER

LEAVES POIGNANT

SUICIDE NOTE



A Literary Farewell Letter

'Nembutal, the drug which has peacefully seen off thousands of animals, is forbidden to humans.'

'Society deems life sacrosanct (I'm not talking about abortion – that's another conversation altogether), its right enshrined in locked-and-bolted law, but the right to death – the most inevitable part of life, is denied – both as a choice and, increasingly, as a natural process.'

'People flap and squawk in the face of suicide: Somebody should have done Something to stop it!' Why? What is the virtue of keeping me alive against my will? Life is not sacrosanct at the cost of joy. What should be protested is people not being allowed to die in compassionate ways when they choose to do so.'

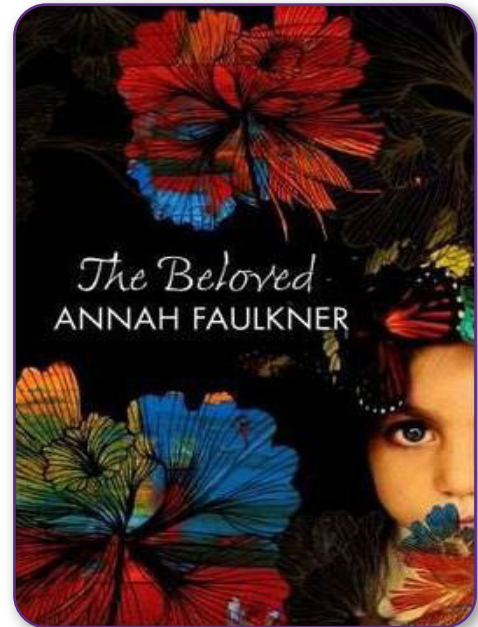
Annah then asks her reader to 'glimpse' her future.

'Unavoidable physical and/or mental decline. Pain, maybe dementia, loss of competence, incontinence, friends and independence disappearing. My current living arrangements are not physically sustainable and I will finish up in either a small unit with in-home care, or a nursing home.'

These prospects, for me, represent a living hell. I do not want to become an old lady forced to endure a life of ever-decreasing quality, in addition to clogging up an already clogged health system, and if that smacks of self-pity, I'm annoyed with my skills as a communicator.

A society that bans one of the few peaceful deaths available is neither compassionate nor liberal. Australia, congratulating itself on being democratic and open, is starched rigid with laws.

Calm, constructive conversations around self-compassionate, elective deaths are ridiculously overdue ... In advocating for the legalisation of Nembutal I'm not suggesting unobstructed access, instant hand-outs based on impulsive decisions. (Youth suicide is not the subject of this discussion, it's an entirely different conversation.)



I speak for people who, like me, have lived long and well, have reflected deeply on their reasons for wanting to die, and understand the consequences of their decision, especially on those who love them.

If not for my friends at Exit International I would be unspeakably lonely. Ironically, I have never met a more vibrant, funny, intelligent, alive group of people in my life.

Many, if not most, simply want the certainty of being able to die if and when they choose. Most will not choose, yet that option makes life feel more precious to them ... They do not judge. They neither encourage nor discourage me.

They hold me in their love. But if they dare hold my hand while I die, they will be charged with assisting in my death. A compassionate society does not deny its citizens the right to choose.

Please, dismantle Australia's sanctimonious, outdated and cruel laws and make this society a wise and kind one. Let me die in peace. Legalise Nembutal.

** The full text of Annah's letter is published on the Exit website.*

Australian/ NZ Workshop Tour

November 2022 - February 2023

Despite our best intention, the July workshops have been postponed until November and will now take place from this November until February 2023.

The tour will include over 20 cities and towns in Australia and New Zealand. The July tour needed to be cancelled due to a range of factors, not least the east coast floods, the surging Omicron/ Deltacron variants and, finally, the war in Europe which has put everyone (including Philip Nitschke) on edge.

A summer tour offers more certainty in the booking of venues and social distancing/ testing requirements due to Covid.

Registrations are already open on the Exit website. Bookings ahead of time will help with the selection and planning of venues.

Workshops in 2022 - 2023 are exclusive for Members of Exit International. Workshops are a free event.

<https://www.exitinternational.net/meetings/exit-live-workshops/>

Worshop Tour Cities

Adelaide, SA
Alice Springs, NT
Auckland, NZ
Brisbane, QLD
Bundaberg, QLD
Canberra, ACT
Darwin, NT
Gold Coast, QLD
Hobart, TAS
Margaret River, WA
Melbourne, VIC
Nelson, NZ
Newcastle, NSW
Northern Rivers, NSW
Perth, WA
Sunshine Coast, QLD
Sydney, NSW
Townsville, QLD
Victor Harbor, SA
Wellington, NZ



Perth Workshop, 2019 (pre-Covid 19)

The Arizona Sisters

The mystery of their secret Swiss death



In February 2022, two Exit Members from Arizona in the US, told friends that they were going on vacation to Dubai. In actual fact, they were going to Switzerland for an assisted suicide.

Both sisters had niggling small health complaints but neither was what you could call 'ill'. They were both in their 50s. Lila Ammouri was a palliative care doctor. Susan Frazier was a registered nurse. They lived together.

The women had actually intended on going to Switzerland much earlier than this year but Covid restrictions made the trip too complicated, and too difficult. It seems they decided to wait.

While there was no illegality with the sisters dying in Switzerland, because they had told no one of their plans, their failure to return to work when expected meant they became missing persons. The media was notified of their missing status and the story snow-balled from there.

Exit was contacted about the sisters by the media as the story grew, thanks largely to the US tabloids. With Pegasos' Ruedi Habegger, Philip Nitschke put out a statement clarifying the situation of their joint deaths.

However, even this did not put an end to the conspiracy theories with *The Daily Beast* writing:

'Many wondered if they had secret illnesses, or had been tricked, or even lured into the dark organ trade in Europe. And if they were suicidal, why did they pay tens of thousands of dollars to do it in Switzerland?' They continued:

'A source close to the family found the suicides so unfathomable that they believed the sisters may have faked them and instead gone off the grid, telling *The Daily Beast* they "bought new luggage, expensive clothes and had their eyelashes done" and were "celebrating with champagne in the airport lounge".'

Yet living it up at the end is not that surprising to Exit, nor is telling no one of one's plans, especially if one is fearful of being stopped. As for being suicidal, the fact that the sisters paid out a lot of money for an assisted suicide challenges societal beliefs that middle class people do not choose to exit early. The suicide of the sisters was informed, well considered and rational. It is a direct affront to those who believe that only depressed people suicide. Sadly, this may explain some of the sensational reporting.

EXITORIAL with Philip Nitschke

The Essentials Edition

Since my last Exitorial the bulk of my time has been taken up with the re-write of the new Essential Edition of the Peaceful Pill eHandbook. This is the first time since 2008 that I have undertaken a whole-of-book update. Some might say the time is well overdue.

The aim of the new edition is to strip the book down to its bare essentials: the information that the reader wants at their finger tips. Over time the book has become encyclopedic in nature.

While this depth and breadth of information has its place, it is not essential for most readers. This is why the current format will be kept, but as appendices. The online version of the book will contain less than 200 pages proper, with a further 500 pages as Appendices.

The anticipated print edition will be published without the appendices. This will make for easier, less-complicated reading. Despite finding the process of writing often painful and slow, I am determined to produce a book that is more accessible, less wieldy and more suitable to fulfill our original ambition as the 'go-to' source for accurate, up-to-date end of life information.



My April Fools Day Tweet!

Australian/ NZ Workshop Tour

The news of the floods on Australia's east coast remains shocking and our thoughts go out to those affected. Whereas we had hoped to conduct our first post-covid Workshop Tour in July 2022, the aftermath of the floods (together with Covid) put paid to those plans. It was soon obvious that venues were uncertain as to their availability. And then there was the issue of social distancing, especially for an older audience. This uncertainty pointed to a logistical disaster in the making.

Instead, the Workshop Tour shall now take place over summer, commencing November 2022 and ending in February 2023. Registrations are already open and I do urge Members to show their interest as this will help with forward-planning. Thank you.

Self-Compassionate Elective Death?

This newsletter has always been called 'Deliverance' - based on the concept of 'self-deliverance' - meaning a non-medical, self-determined right to die. For too long, the English language has been searching for new words to describe our right to end our lives when/ as we choose. Rational suicide is problematic, assisted dying is unhelpful (since no assistance is required). In her poignant letter this month, Annah Faulkner talks of a 'self-compassionate, elective death'. Let the discussion begin.

Podcasts & Videos

Cancel-Uncancel Culture & More

In January this year, during a painful episode of shingles, Philip Nitschke took part in a podcast with a group of young psychiatrists from the University of California. The Podcast series is called 'Let's get psyched'. The invitation to Philip read: 'we would be honored to have you as an expert guest'. After the Podcast the group wrote again: 'We appreciate you giving us your time and thoughtful responses. We all enjoyed the show a great deal and think listeners will as well'.

Only the Podcast never made it to publication. When Exit queried why the link which they had tweeted had suddenly disappeared (only to be replaced by an interview with a Medical Aid in Dying law academic from Nevada), the group would explain: 'over that time period the group became divided about the episode. We also received listener feedback expressing concern. We decided to take it down while we try to come to an agreement ... we have involved 2 bioethicist mentors ... we apologize for not notifying you about the change.'

Finally, the situation was clear. Philip had been cancelled because of his views. The irony is that he was invited to participate in the Podcast precisely because of his views. Fortunately, Exit had saved the Podcast before it was so unceremoniously dumped and this can be heard on the Exit International website.

But that is not the end of the story. On 1 April (no this was not an April Fools Joke) the Let's Get Psyched

team wrote again: 'After numerous meetings with our university's various officers, ethical and legal advisors, we have arrived at a solution we are all comfortable with - The episode is now posted in its final form. We took out mention of the book ...'

What is fascinating about the ordeal is the moral panic of the group in having to engage with the views expressed by Philip: views which amount to little more than his regular expressed contention that the decision to end one's life can be a rational act that comes about after careful consideration. That suicide is not automatically irrational and that suicide can be a considered response by those suffering from long-term depression. And, finally, that not every one who suicides is depressed or in need of psychiatric treatment.

On a more positive note, Philip also recently participated in a Videocast with the Hemlock Society of San Diego. His (largely) older audience for this interview were welcoming and open-minded. The topic of the conversation was 'do you need permission to die'.

The Videocast can be seen via the Exit & Hemlock websites on Youtube at: <https://bit.ly/Hemlockyoutube>

The Podcast can be accessed on the Peacefulpill.com website at: <https://bit.ly/psychedpodcast>



EXIT PODCAST UNCANCELLED

LET'S GET PSYCHED UNCANCELLED

Exclusive Interview with PHILIP NITSCHKE UNCANCELLED

All Exit Podcasts on www.peacefulpill.com

Listen on **Apple Podcasts**

Listen on **Google Podcasts**

Spotify

Sarco Update

The Sarco project continues, albeit it slower than one would like. The new Sarco is still in production in Rotterdam in the Netherlands as the photos on this page attest.

While 3D printing is always a slow, gradual process, the same cannot be said for the public's fascination in the concept of Sarco. In recent months invitations have been received in rapid fire from museums and theatres in such disparate locations as Austria, Poland, Spain and, of course, Switzerland.

This week the purple Sarco is due back from an exhibition in Kassel in Germany. Next week it is expected to go to Poland where it will feature at the Nowy Theatre in Poznan. It will also be destined for an exhibition in Switzerland in late summer 2022 and then to Spain in early 2023.

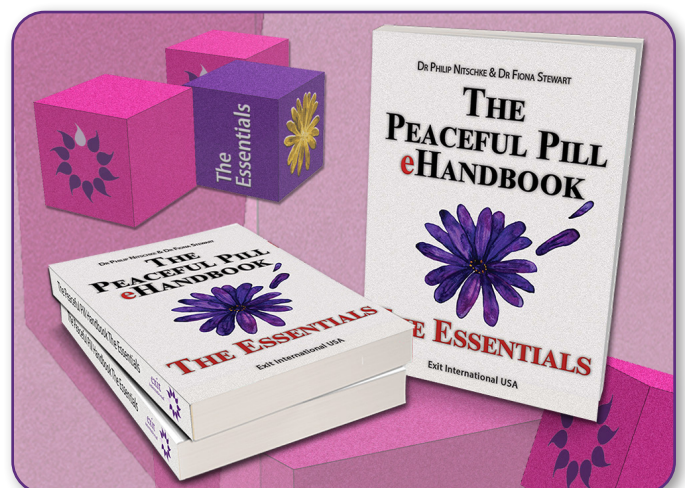
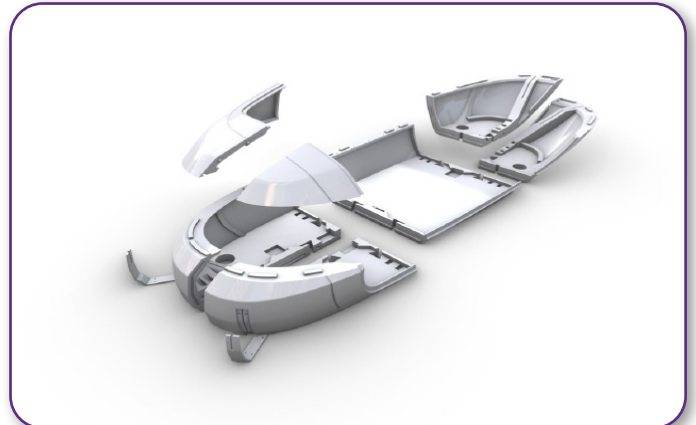
These exhibitions are important because they create a talking point about the role of Sarco in end of life choices, and open the discussion about the end of life more broadly.

Peaceful Pill eHandbook - The Essentials Edition

Since February, the authors of the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* have been working intensively on a new edition to be known as 'The Essentials Edition'.

'The Essentials' seeks to condense the current 540 pages to 200.

Most importantly 'The Essentials' will contain new sections on Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) and Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) laws around the world and help the reader to determine whether or not they qualify for a law in their home state or country. Other new chapters include VSED - the voluntary stopping of eating and drinking.



Current eHandbook subscribers will have their subscriptions automatically transferred to the new edition (keeping the current long-format as added Appendices). A print edition will also be published.

Anthony Albanese

Does one speech make the man?



With the Australian election upon us, it seems timely to reflect on the speech of the current leader of the Australian Parliamentary Labor Party, Anthony Albanese. (This does not mean Exit is supporting any political party as we know, the broad issue of voluntary euthanasia is a cross-party concern with strong support from the far left and the far right.)

In his first year in Parliament, Albanese was one of the most vocal opponents of the Euthanasia Laws Act (known at the time as the Kevin Andrews Act). Melbourne Liberal MP for Menzies, Kevin Andrews put forward the bill which outlawed the ability of Australia's territories to pass laws on voluntary euthanasia.

The Andrews' private members bill was decided by a conscience vote in the Federal Parliament, supported by both sides of Parliament. It's passing led to the overturning of the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act (ROTI) (of the Northern Territory). The rest is history.

During the debate on the Euthanasia Laws Act, Albanese's speech was notable for its eloquence, its

passion and its strong support for end of life rights, as recognised in Philip Nitschke's 2005 book, *Killing Me Softly*. In opposition to the overturning of the ROTI Act, Anthony Albanese argued:

We have all accepted that this parliamentary debate should be a matter for our conscience.

How arrogant to then suggest that the ability to exercise conscience should be taken from a seriously ill patient who wants to die.

There is nothing moral about our exercising a free conscience vote as members of parliament and then voting to deny to others the right to exercise their conscience.

What possible right do Kevin Andrews, Leo McLeay, Lindsay Tanner or Anthony Albanese have to have exercised Bob Dent's conscience for him?

It was his decision and he had a right to do that.

The full text of Albanese's speech can be found on the Exit website at: <https://bit.ly/albanesespeech> and, of course, in Hansard.