

March
2023

exit
international

THIS ISSUE

- 1 Australian Tour Update
- 2 PPeH Essentials News
- 3 Dutch Court Action Fails
- 4 Vice Documentary on SBS
- 5 Exitorial
- 6 Sarco Developments
- 7 Aust Territories to Legislate
- 7 Bron Norman Awarded
- 8 Member News in 2023

Workshop Dates

Wed 22 Feb 2023
Hobart Meeting & Workshop

Sat 25 Feb 2023
Melbourne Chapter Mtg & Workshop

Tues 7 March 2023
Brisbane Workshop

Sat 11 March 2023
Bundaberg Mtg & Workshop

Thurs 16 March 2023
Sunshine Coast Mtg & Workshop

Sat 22 April 2023
Sydney Workshop

Australian Tour 2023

Workshops Update

Despite the odd hiccup, the current Australian Tour has been an overwhelming success. To date, workshops have been held in Adelaide, Canberra, the Gold Coast, Lismore, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth and Sydney.

With a global overview from his home in the Netherlands, Philip has long maintained that it is a wasted opportunity to vote in laws that only help the terminally ill. A good death should have much wider application than this.

Philip has been warmly welcomed back to Australia (his first visit since the pandemic). Those attending the meetings have expressed widespread gratitude and are so pleased to have him back.

The content of the workshops is also entirely new, such is the fast-moving field of end of life choices. The workshops' agenda has also been devised so that it will assist the majority of people who, inevitably, will find themselves falling through the cracks in the various state assisted dying/ voluntary euthanasia laws.

Take the Netherlands as an example. While this country legislated after the Northern Territory (with the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*), activists are working to broaden the Dutch *Termination of Life Upon Request Act* to include the 'well' elderly. A good death it is argued is a fundamental human right. And this is despite the fact that people who are mentally ill (including those with dementia) can receive help to die in the Netherlands.

The conservative nature of the Australian laws have made Exit's DIY workshops more relevant than ever.



All masked up at the December 2022 Perth Workshop

Since its publication in June 2022, the new Essentials edition of the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* has undergone four major updates and countless minor updates.

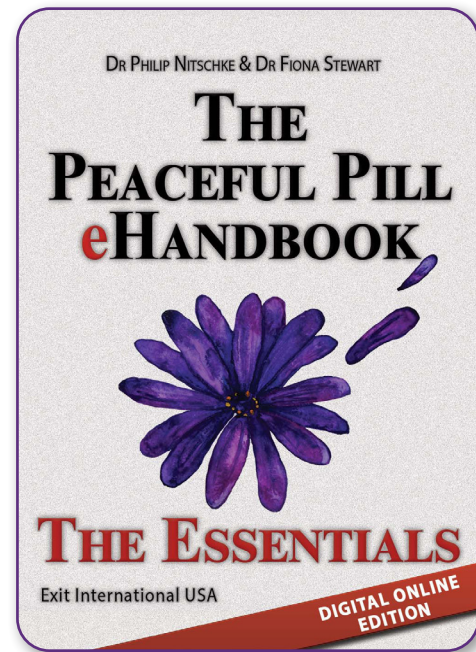
With barely two months of the new year gone, the book has already been updated twice. The January update focused on **new guidelines for the testing of Nembutal** in Spain. The February update brought news of a new source of **sodium nitrite** (a lawful purchase and import item), as well as an addition concerning the '**DeBreather**'. The inventor of the original device tells Exit that he has made significant changes to the device. We shall report on these in the March 2023 update to the online book.

The *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* remains the leading book globally on practical end of life choices.

Topics include:

- Physiology of dying
- All about lethal drugs & poisons
- Lethal sedative drugs
- Lethal cardiac drugs
- US 5-Drug Mix
- Supplementary drugs
- Lethal Inorganic Salts
- Inert Gases
- Sarco
- Poisonous Gases
- VSED (voluntary stopping eating & drinking)
- Online Safety & Privacy
- When it all goes wrong?
- VAD/MAiD Laws around the World
- Swiss Option
- Afterword
- Reliability – Peacefulness Table

The philosophy of the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* is that a good death is everybody's right. Furthermore, with knowledge comes control and personal autonomy. While few will actively wish to use the information in the book, having a plan in place for the future can bring



enormous peace of mind. When the contents of the book bring calm and confidence, we know we have done our job well.

While some of the methods, or more specifically the drugs, discussed in the book are illegal in some countries, the methods are overwhelmingly lawful.

As far as Exit members are concerned, the organisation has always strongly recommended that the book is read thoroughly before a workshop or online event is attended. This allows for a more nuanced and considered imparting of information by Philip at question time.

The *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* is intended to enable readers to prepare an Exit Plan at home and in their own time. This avoids the problems associated with the ridiculously expensive and intensely bureaucratic one way trip to the services in Switzerland. The other problem with the Swiss option is how to time one's run: never too early or too late. At least until the Sarco is launched in Switzerland late this year, Exit strongly recommends that other plans are devised.

Dutch Court Rejects 'Autonomous' Route

In early 2020, the Constitutional Courts of both Austria and Germany confirmed that 'the right to self-determination over one's own end of life follows from the *European Convention on Human Rights*.' It was on this point of law that the Dutch activist group challenged the Dutch ban on assisted suicide: noting that the law dated back to the 1880s and, as such, was out of touch with today's reality.

As reported on previously in *Deliverance*, a total of 29 plaintiffs - all members of the group Cooperation LastWill - took the Dutch State to court last October. Their argument centred upon the allegation that if the right to end one's life via suicide is a fundamental human right (a constitutional right linked to one's 'personality' and based upon individual autonomy) then the right to assisted suicide must follow.

While acknowledging that the current Dutch euthanasia law excludes many elderly Dutch people, the court refused to extend recognition of personal end of life rights in the same way as has been ruled in Germany and Austria. Lawyers for CLW state

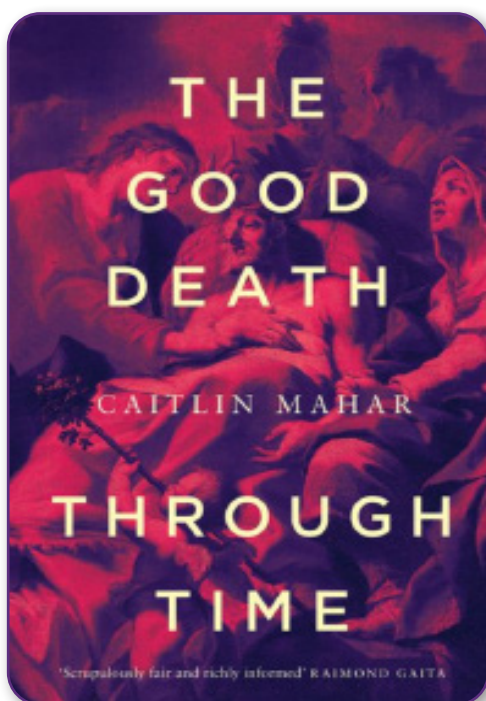


that the case is a starting not an end point. They stress the 'autonomous route' will be recognised: the question is when.

New Book Provides Depth & Context

As if 'right on cue' a new book has been published in February which details precisely these types of arguments about autonomy and self-determination at the end of life. Published by Melbourne University Press, Caitlin Mahar's *The Good Death Through Time* has international relevance in regard to understanding the social and cultural mores towards when and how we die. In particular, she examines Philip Nitschke's philosophical approach to DIY end of life choices through the years: from the 1996 Deliverance Machine (now in the British Science Museum) to the 3D-printed Sarco device.

Later this year, Exit hopes to provide her with more to consider and write about when the Sarco comes to be used. *The Good Death Through Time* is available from Amazon on Kindle.



Vice Exit Documentary

- Now Free to Stream on SBS



When Vice UK approached Exit with the idea making a feature documentary juxtaposing the inner workings of Exit alongside the public face of the organisation, the year was 2014. Some five years later the doco premièred in London, winning the Fragments Film Festival for best film in 2019.

Fast-forward another four years and *Time to Die* is now available (in condensed format) on Australia's SBS On Demand streaming platform.

Time to Die follows four people, three of whom were Exit members.

Professor Avril Henry was a retired professor of medieval history at the University of Exeter. Avril was elderly but not sick. She had decided against Switzerland because she wanted to die at home and be buried in her orchard.

Chris Nolan had bowel cancer. Married with 2 young daughters, Chris was trying to cling to life. At the same time he wanted choice.

The third Exit member whose journey was followed by Vice was Adam Maier-Clayton in Canada. Adam suffered many years of mental anguish: a condition

his parents both understood. They respected his decision to take his own life, despite the fact he was only 27 years old.

Not only did the crew of *Time to Die* spend many nights in Edinburgh filming Philip Nitschke's 2015 stand-up comedy show 'Dicing with Dr Death' which he performed at the 2015 Edinburgh Fringe, but they also captured the first tests of the Sarco capsule. These tests used a rudimentary stainless steel tent-like container which was then exposed to liquid nitrogen. This is precious footage of an important early period in the development of the Sarco machine.

On making the documentary, director Yonni Usiken wrote: "To think back to the days of Ireland, Edinburgh, Interpol and Avril - it's been quite a ride'. Yonni is not wrong. Philip was interviewed by the London Met, accused of assisting suicide by holding workshops in the UK. No charges were laid. Avril had her front door kicked in by the local constabulary in an attempt to stop her from taking her own life. Adam Maier-Clayton's desire to die was repeatedly foiled such was his public profile.

Exit commends *Time to Die* to all readers. Use a VPN to access SBS On Demand via the Web.

EDITORIAL with Philip Nitschke

My Recent Brush(es) with Sepsis

Like many people (and despite my medical training), until recently I had little knowledge of Sepsis (poisoning of the blood). That state of affairs has now changed with two bouts of hospital under my belt and an extended course of oral anti-biotics I am looking forward to better times ahead. I'd like to thank those who have made contact. Your support and well wishes have been appreciated. There is nothing like a near brush with death to make one appreciate the daily grind that little bit more, and to remember to enjoy the company and spiritedness of those I am fortunate enough to work alongside. I'd like to thank the Exit team for keeping things running, and especially Fiona for being by my side.

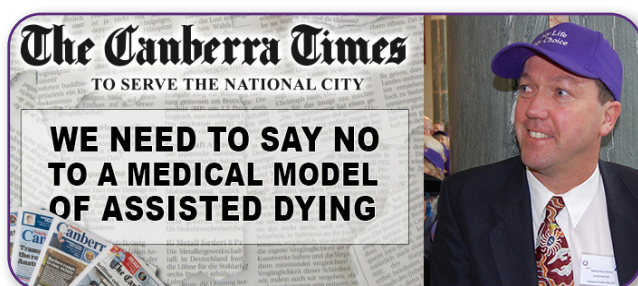


Recovering in RPA Hospital Sydney, February 2023

Australian Territories Free to Legislate

At the beginning of December last year, the ban on Australian territories legislating on voluntary euthanasia was finally lifted in the Australian Federal Parliament. Brought in 1997 by way of a private member's bill by Kevin Andrews, the *Euthanasia Laws Act* led to the cessation of the Northern Territory's *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*. At the time Andrews bragged he had set the euthanasia movement back 25 years. On this point he was not wrong.

While it is still early days, it was pleasing to see the Coordinator of Exit's Canberra Chapter - Dr David Swanton - pen a thought-provoking piece in the *Canberra Times* on 11 February, pleading



with the ACT Assembly to look further than the highly problematic medical model of law reform.

It has been a disappointing time to watch Australia slavishly go down the medical model path, developing a model of end of life rights which is so unfair and discriminatory. The vast majority of elderly Australians simply want to know that they have choice in their final years, regardless of whether or not they are terminally ill. Old age is not a terminal illness but it can bring 'poly-pathologies' which lower life quality and can lead to death becoming a preferable option. Within the medical model adopted by all Australian states, it is this silent majority who are excluded. It did not need to be this way.

New DeBreather?

In the past month, news has arrived of yet another incantation of the DeBreather device, this one with a new and improved mode of operation which, I hope (and expect,) will 'do the job'. The inventor of the device has always been well intended. The difficulties that he experienced were not, and in many ways could not, have been foreseen. This is the nature of R&D. While Exit will withhold judgement of this new model, we are much more optimistic about it. The DeBreather will be featured in the April 2023 update to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook Essentials*.

Sarco Developments

- the Road Ahead in 2023

Despite my tour of Australia, the printing of the 3rd Sarco has gone ahead in leaps and bounds. While the process of 3D printing is never fast, it is pleasing to see the parts come together and that the quality of 'workmanship' of this latest incarnation of the Sarco is so high: remembering that this is the Sarco that will be used this year to provide an elective peaceful, hypoxic death.

Alongside the printing of this final Sarco have been discussions with lawyers in Europe about the best/ safest way for Sarco to be used. Should it be used in Switzerland or another country whose laws allow it? The Constitutional Court rulings in other countries (eg. Germany), and the lack of a prohibition on assisted suicide in countries like Finland, present a range of final options.

Of course, the existing Swiss groups of Pegasos and Dignitas would prefer that the Sarco is kept out of their backyard. NIMBY (not in my backyard) has taken on extra poignancy during the life of the Sarco project: especially following the viral Swiss Info story about Sarco being 'approved' for use in Switzerland. (The accurate side of this story is that Sarco does not need approval because there is no prohibition on its use. The article was, in fact, about the positive legal review the device received from the late Swiss law professor, Daniel Hurlimann).

It has been and remains disappointing that Dignitas and Pegasos have been critical in the media about the Sarco. Exit appreciates that both groups prefer the medical model of assisted dying. Neither wishes to have their business model disrupted by something as innovative as the Sarco.



Pieces of the Sarco Jigsaw



Progress finally realised!

As we go to press, Exit is awaiting final Swiss legal advice. We would hope to have the Sarco's own organisational entity in place in the coming months. Once the paperwork is finalised, there is little to prevent the Sarco from its first use. Members who are especially interested in the Sarco are advised to contact Exit by email in the first instance.

Snippets - Free for Members

Australian Territories to Legislate

Bron Norman Awarded

Online Snippets Now Free

Too valuable to let sit, the online Snippets that were recorded each month during 2021 are now available free to members of Exit International. While some topics have moved on, there remains much that will prove valuable to those seeking to hear directly from Philip Nitschke about the practical aspects of end of life choices. Subscribers to the Peaceful Pill eHandbook are still able to subscribe to the Snippet series.

Access is available at:

<https://www.exitinternational.net/meetings/workshops/>

Together Again Post-Covid

It has taken 3 years but Exit's hard-working Chapter Coordinators were finally able to come together on the Gold Coast for 2 days of planning for the year ahead.

Exit was pleased to welcome 3 new 'Chappies': Lawrence in Melbourne and Sue and Molly who take over from Julia Harrison in Adelaide. Elaine Arch-Rowe has also come back to Exit with the aim of re-energising the Sunshine Coast Chapter. As we go to press, we are also pleased to welcome Ruth Boydell in Newcastle: a chapter which has been sadly neglected in recent years.

During the Gold Coast meeting, the absence of Suzy Austen was notable. In July 2022, Suzy fell 'up the stairs'



Award Recipient Bron Norman with Philip Nitschke



at her beach house, hitting her head. The result is a serious head injury. Sadly, it is uncertain if she will ever recover enough to volunteer again with Exit. The organisation is grateful to Jan Rosie (formerly of the Nelson NZ Chapter (stepping into the rather large void left by Suzy.

The meeting of coordinators also acknowledged the death of Melbourne coordinator Chris Lovelock in January, noting that we were pleased that he finally got the death he wanted. Chris exited using sodium nitrite. His recent funeral attracted many from the Exit community in Melbourne, such was his popularity.

The agenda for the 2 days included briefings on Exit's primary activities both within Australia and internationally, most particularly the Sarco machine. More practical issues were also discussed including New Member Meetings (to introduce them to the organisation), ways to manage member expectations within the context of the new State laws, the growth in Coffee & Chat groups around the country, policies about guest speakers and more.

On a less positive note, the meeting acknowledged the ongoing problem posed by Australian Border Force in regard to the interception of print editions of the *Peaceful Pill Handbook*. Philip used the occasion to emphasise the benefit of the online *eHandbook* over the print editions: a) because the online version cannot be intercepted and b) because it is continually updated with the latest information.

The final night saw a group dinner at the Bondi Grill in Coolangatta where long-time Exit volunteer (& underground activist) **Bron Norman was awarded with a Lifetime Appreciation Award** for helping so many Exit members over almost 20 years!!

Member News in 2023



At the recent **planning meeting** of Exit's Chapter Coordinators, an empty chair (front row) was left for former Wellington NZ coordinator, Suzy Austen. Suzy's freak accident (which has left her with a serious acquired brain injury) serves to remind us all how tenuous life can be. And, how we should all make the most of every day.

With this in mind, as soon as the Australian tour is completed in mid April, Philip Nitschke will be heading straight back to the Netherlands. Philip's main task for the remainder of the year is the **Sarco** project. With years of delays (not least because of the pandemic), the culmination of 8 years thinking and labour is about to come to fruition.

Outside of the Sarco project, Philip also plans to recommence his regular **Webinar and Podcast** series of online workshops. The **webinars** will be held in two main ways:

1. with individual attendees who will zoom in from their homes
2. in conjunction with local Chapter meetings where Exit members will all be in the one room and Philip will appear on Zoom to provide information and answer questions.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it is that online communication makes possible what was previously inconceivable. When it comes to imparting knowledge about DIY practical options, online webinars can be a wonderful alternative to an exhaustive and logistically difficult program of face to face workshops. For those not online, the second option of coming to a physical space with others and having an Exit representative look after the tech side of the webinar should prove popular.

The **Podcasts** will continue to be public open access. With Sean Davison now fully on board as a working Director of Exit, Sean will be hosting and participating also in the series.

Handy Tips to Stay in Touch

And speaking of the media, 2022 closed with an appearance on the TV show of the 'other Dr Phil', which is available on the Exit site. Members are reminded that all Exit media can be found on the Exit website. Use the search-box to find a keyword or the News link for articles. If any editions of *Deliverance* or the weekly Exit Internationalist Email Newsletter are missed these, too, are on the Exit website: as both current editions as well as an extensive archive. Chapters can also be contacted by phone/ email via the details listed on the site.