



PRESS RELEASE

Senate euthanasia committee ignores the Dying

The Senate Inquiry into the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008 begins hearings this week in Darwin and Sydney and has ignored the representations from those who will be directly affected by the proposed Legislation.

Speaking from his home in Warragul, Victoria, 78 year old mesothelioma sufferer and Exit member Don Flounders said he was disappointed not to be able to speak to the Senate committee when the public hearings were held.

“I lodged a submission Senate committee looking into the proposed legislation and asked for the chance to put the case directly to the Senators”, Don said.

“The legislation they are considering will directly affect me. As it is, I had to travel to Mexico in February (shortly after completing a strong 6-week course of radio-therapy in order to obtain the drugs needed for a peaceful death. The long and uncomfortable ‘economy’ flight caused me a considerable amount of pain. Angie, a fellow ‘Exit’ member and friend now physically unable to make the trip herself due to the advanced, stage of her bone cancer contributed towards the cost of the trip. Subsequently, both she and my wife had to suffer the indignity of having our homes raided and searched by officers from the Australian Federal police.

“I wanted to explain to the Senators that there is a better way for Australian society than to leave in place laws that force many sick elderly Australians to become law breakers in their final months”.

Don said that he was concerned that of the 18 people giving presentations to the Senate Committee, none invited were sufferers directly affected by the considered legislation as he was.

“Philip Nitschke will speak for our organisation, Exit, but that is not the same as having a presentation from someone who has found themselves directly caught up in, and forced to break, existing laws”.

Don said he was pleased he had taken the steps that gave him access to the drug Nembutal but pointed out that if the NT voluntary euthanasia law was still in place he would not have had to take such drastic measures to ensure he had choice at the end of his life.

Senate hearings commence in Darwin at 1.30 Monday 14th and Sydney at 1.30 Wed 16th April