

DIRTY TRICKS

STORIES FROM WEST AUSTRALIA

As the lobbying intensifies over West Australia's possible new euthanasia law, it is only to be expected that those opposing a 'yes' vote will get down in the mud and dirty. This is life and death politics after all.

One man throwing a lot of dirt in the debate is the Catholic psychiatrist, Professor David Kissane. An old adversary (and one-time collaborator) of Philip Nitschke's, Kissane has long worked hard against euthanasia legislation being passed.

More than this, Kissane has often used his position of privilege and authority within the medical profession to convince politicians of the 'evils' of choice. The gifting of an Australian AC award to Kissane in 2018 perhaps shows just how effective he has been in influencing the debate.

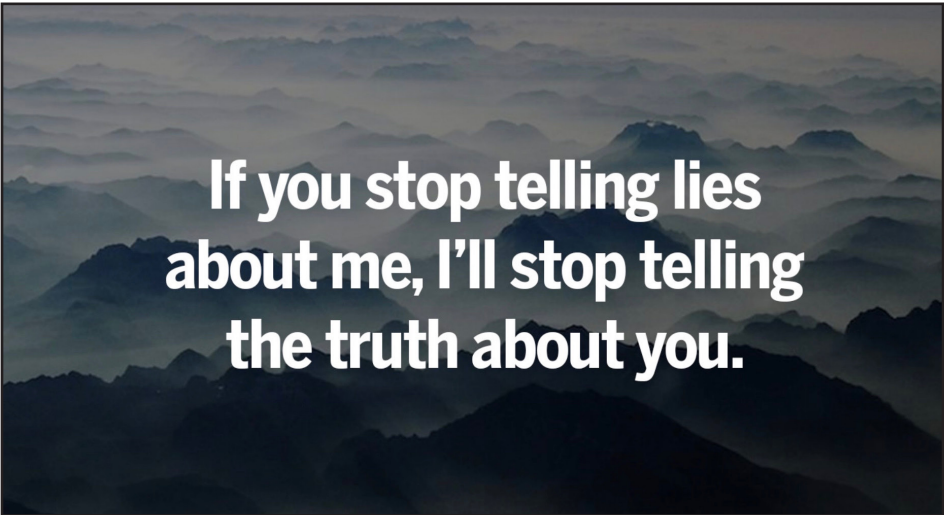
Kissane's 'propaganda' is now part of the dissenting minority report of West Australian MLC Nick Goiran. It is on the public record as fact. However, this is not the end of the matter. It may be just the start. Because in peddling his

'alternative facts', David Kissane has been spreading outright lies: about Bob Dent (the first man to use the Northern Territory's *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*), about the state of Bob and Judy Dent's marriage and about what really happened back in Darwin some 22 years ago.

As is well known, Kissane and Nitschke were once collaborators on an article for the *Lancet* medical journal. Their article was titled 'Seven Deaths in Darwin'. The aim of the joint authorship was to provide an accurate and impartial p. 2

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If you stop telling lies
about me, I'll stop telling
the truth about you.

DIRTY TRICKS CONT

account (for the public record) of what took place in Darwin during the time of the *ROTI Act*. Yet as soon as the article was published, Philip Nitschke says that David Kissane started embellishing its contents. He started creating fiction out of fact. The professor began to use the article as his personal political platform. The article tied him to Dr Philip Nitschke. This link allowed him to speak authoritatively about Darwin and the *ROTI Act*. Kissane is employing the same tactics some 20 years later.

Only this time, his stories are more personal. They are about Bob and Judy Dent. Judy is now so furious that she is fighting back. According to David Kissane's testimony, Bob Dent was 'depressed after his divorce', had 'failed to receive radiotherapy', 'wept frequently' and had 'angry fights' with Judy. David Kissane's powerpoint slide has been obtained by Exit and reproduced on this page.

Because these allegations are so hurtful and because they are entirely untrue, Judy has lodged a formal complaint with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists *and* AHPRA (the Australian Health Practitioners Regulatory Authority). Mrs Dent says she wants Kissane suspended as an unfit person to hold a medical license, let alone put AC after his name. In her complaint Judy writes:

You have failed to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of Bob and myself (as his family) by alleging – erroneously that Bob was divorced (you forgot to mention happily remarried to me), that he was taking anti-depressant medication and, by suggesting (most insulting of all), that Bob and I had angry fights.

This last allegation is entirely without a factual basis and is untrue. It is a deeply personal allegation to make of me and I resent and reject it outright. You should be ashamed of yourself.



Judy Dent accuses Professor Kissane of:

- Failing to respect Bob's humanity, dignity and autonomy
- Distorting the circumstances prior to Bob's death
- Misusing his professional knowledge and skills for his own political ends

This amounts to a breach, she writes of Principles 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 10 of the RANZCP's Code of Ethics.

For the record Judy states:

- Bob Dent was divorced and happily remarried at the time of his death.
- Bob did not take anti-depressants for several years after his divorce. As soon as we were both divorced we married.
- Bob did not receive radio-therapy for his cancer because he did not want it.
- Bob needed a catheter both before and after the TURPs procedure.
- Bob and I never had angry fights, or any fights at all for that matter.

Judy Dent is currently awaiting for a response. Meanwhile, significant Aboriginal community leaders have come forward with a similar rehashing of old arguments against the WA bill. These, too, are influenced by the dead hand of the Church. Indeed, there are very few voices of reason within black Australia that are supportive. While there are very few members of Exit who identify as Aboriginal (and thus have an interest in the issue), this should be no reason to disenfranchise everyone else.

(See Exitorial for further comment)

AUSTRALIAN 2019 TOUR REPORT

The 2019 Exit Australian tour took place in the months of July and August this year. Tour dates included:

- Darwin
- Perth
- Adelaide
- Melbourne
- Canberra
- Sydney
- Gold Coast



As is now customary, the meetings were extremely big. Indeed two workshops were held in Sydney (one in the West, the other at the Rex Centre in Potts Point). Around 500 people attended the meetings in Sydney alone.

Exit workshops are the flagship program of Exit International. In contrast to other groups, Exit realises that our members need to have options for the here or now. Alternatively, you want a plan for the future should your health take a turn for the worse. This is the need that Exit aims to address via our workshops program. This is why Exit workshops will continue well into the future.

On this year's tour the media seemed to take an interest in proceedings, no doubt it seems due to the police raids which, uncannily, coincided with the tour.

Exit is very grateful to all those members who spoke out in support of their right to information about end of life choices. The media coverage was overwhelming positive and remains critical in spreading the word about why things must change. We thank all those many volunteers who come together to help with the meetings. Your assistance is very much appreciated. You are the unsung heroes of Exit!

THE STORY OF KEITH HASSALL

For a very small state in terms of population, an extraordinary amount of news comes out of West Australia. Think Lisette Nigot (*Mademoiselle and the Doctor*), Nigel Brayley (the 45-year old who took his life fearing he would be charged with the murders of two female partners and rationalising that death was a better option than life in a West Australian prison) and Professor David Goodall.

And now there is Candice who has the dubious honour of being the first (and only) person to ever gate-crash an Exit workshop and then refuse to leave. At Exit's Perth meeting, Candice confronted Philip over the death of her father in April 2017. It was Philip's fault she said. Now it is true that Candice's father Keith had subscribed to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* continually since it was first published in October 2008. But there is little else that Exit can or should take responsibility for.

The rest is surely down to the Hassall family. Exit senses that the Hassall family never talked about Keith's plans. While we do not know the details of Keith's decision it seems a good time to remind ourselves that open discussion about one's end of life choices can be a rich and valuable thing to do. And it may help children come to terms with one's plans.



Candice refusing to leave the 2019 Exit Perth Workshop

VENICE LIVESTREAM RECORDING

On Saturday 5 October, Philip Nitschke held his final livestream for 2019, from Venice Design at the Palazzo Michiel in Venice.

The topic of the October livestream was - not surprisingly - Sarco and featured Philip in conversation with the co-creator of Sarco, Alex Bannink.

They discussed the trials associated with printing a large 3D object such as the Sarco that is currently on display in Venice. They also discussed the design changes that would be forthcoming in Sarco 2.0 that is currently in printing production at Maak Studios in Haarlem in the Netherlands. It is this second Sarco that is expected to be used in Switzerland in 2020. Sarco 2.0 will, according to Philip Nitschke, change the face of dignified dying globally. More news in the next newsletter.



Philip Nitschke with Alex Bannink, @ Palazzo Michiel, 5 October 2019

If you missed the Livestream, the recording is now available on the final page of the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook*.

EXIT AUST 2020 WORKSHOP DATES

Exit's 2020 Australian workshop tour is scheduled for mid-year and will take in the Australian cities and towns of:

Alice Springs, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle & Sydney. All remaining capitals will be visited later in the year.

Please note that all these dates are to be confirmed at this stage. The exact day or time may change depending on venue availability. The dates will be confirmed in the coming months.

Please check the Exit website for this confirmation. Announcements will also be made in forthcoming Email Newsletters and, of course, in Deliverance.



Melbourne Workshop, 3 August 2019

Australian Workshop 2020 Tour Dates - TBC

Alice Springs

9am – 12 noon @ Saturday, 18 July 2020

Brisbane

11am – 3pm @ Tuesday, 21 July 2020

Sunshine Coast

10am – 1pm @ Thursday, 23 July 2020

Gold Coast

10am - 2pm @ Saturday, 25 July 2020

Coffs Harbour

1 - 4pm @ Monday, 27 July 2020

Newcastle

10am - 1pm @ Thursday, 30 July 2020

Sydney

11am - 4pm @ Saturday, 1 August 2020

Inquiries: 1300 10 3948

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EXITORIAL

e-Deliverance

DIRTY TRICKS - DAVID KISSANE

When Marshall Perron sent me a copy of the slides currently being used by Professor David Kissane to discredit the Parliamentary debate in West Australia I was appalled, but not surprised.

I have long watched Kissane work his way up the ranks of his profession, psychiatry. Always the same. Always hostile to choice. Always doing the bidding of the Church but under the guise of medical expertise. A true wolf in sheep's clothing.

I think, however, with his allegations about Judy Dent that Kissane has finally gone one step too far. Sure, his slides were never meant for general consumption but he presumably wanted his views recorded in the parliamentary record.

This is why Judy and I set to work on her complaint letter. While I realise it might be fine for me to stand by, this is Judy's life that Kissane is rewriting and it is Bob's memory. At a deeply personal and ethical level this is beyond the bounds of decency. His lies are also detrimental to the quality of the debate in West Australia. They diminish us all. Disagree with the pro-choice position if you like. But don't embellish the facts in order to rewrite history.

Exit will continue to work with Judy on complaints to Professor Kissane's employer, the Medical Board and others to ensure that her voice is heard and that Kissane's expert medical opinion is revealed for what it is.

BLACK VOICES & EUTHANASIA

Ever since white Australia's invasion/ settlement, the Church has been an especially strong colonising voice in remote Aboriginal communities. It was perhaps to be expected back in Darwin in 1996, that there would be strong opposition from such communities towards the then *ROTI Act*. Back then, the whole debate about euthanasia came to symbolise a modern version of the 'poison water hole'. That the law was nothing but a sleight of hand by a right-wing, openly-racist government (led by Marshall Perron) to promote further genocide.

While no one is suggesting that Marshall was some modern-day white supremacist, back then there was enormous distrust and suspicion between Aboriginal Northern Territorians and the CLP government. This ill-will had a long history. In consultations with black communities, the poison waterhole was a concept that dominated. History now tells it that the *ROTI Act* was seen as a threat to black Australians who already needed convincing to trust and use the white man's medical system. A euthanasia law was seen as the height of cultural insensitivity.

These same arguments are now being touted by the likes of WA Senator Pat Dodson, Ken Wyatt (Federal Minister for Indigenous Health) and surgeon Kelvin Kong. I would like to think that the past 2 decades have taught us something and that such arguments were no longer necessary. But apparently they are.

While the casting vote in the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* was passed by the Aboriginal Member for Arnhem, Wes Lanhupuy, I acknowledge that the right to choose at the end of life has scant relevance for a population of people who are struggling to stay alive. The question is, however, should their rejection of euthanasia mean that no one should have choice. The answer to this is clearly no. The challenge therefore is to learn from the mistakes of the CLP government 20 years ago in Darwin and undertake meaningful, intelligent consultations so that no one is left under any impression of the voluntary, civilised nature of a voluntary assisted dying law.

PEGASOS SWISS ASSOCIATION

I am so pleased that our good friend Ruedi has finally launched his new VAD (voluntary assisted dying) service in Basel. Exit and the 'Goodall Dream Team' (as he refers to his Swiss colleagues) have been through some tough times together. Not only with the 2018 death of Professor David Goodall but in February this year when Melbourne fireman Troy Thornton (and his wife Chris) went to Basel and were cared for and helped by Ruedi et al. Exit wishes Ruedi all the best with Pegasos.

Philip Nitschke

AUSTRALIAN POLICE RAIDS

On the eve of Exit's Australian tour last July, the organisation was very concerned to learn that a series of police visits disguised as 'welfare checks' were taking place in cities across various Australian states.

The pattern was always the same. The police would arrive at a person's door, ask themselves inside and then drill the person as to whether or not they had ever imported

or tried to import Nembutal into the country. These police visits target the elderly. Somehow it

seems, to be old and organised makes you a vulnerable citizen: a person in need of protection from yourself. Should the police come calling at your home, the legal advice

is to not let them in. This can be said in a friendly but firm manner. As we have said in this newsletter before, there is no such thing as an innocent, friendly chat or cup of tea where the authorities are involved. And remember, you do not need to tell them anything. Forewarned is fore-armed!



NEMBUTAL RAIDS ACROSS FRANCE

On 15 October, members of our sister organisation - Ultime Liberte - were subject to early dawn raids by the French Police. In a tip-off by the US authorities (also in last July), the French Police went knocking on elderly people's doors at 6am, demanding entry and that they hand over their drugs.

In all, 130 bottles of Nembutal were seized in 103 different locations across 18 regions in France. News reports state that over 300 French police officers were involved. To date, Exit knows of no arrests.

This extraordinary show of force by the French state shows how seriously this secular, yet strongly Catholic, nation takes the issue of assisted suicide.

In this regard France has unusual laws providing a legal obligation to prevent suicide, even if the person is of sound mind and elderly.

This legal obligation to act, can amount to an extraordinary interference by a person in another adult's ability to prepare for the future.

France remains the only country to ban Derek Humphry's book *Final Exit. The Peaceful Pill eHandbook* has not (yet) been banned in France. The take-home message from these raids is that if you are lucky enough to have Nembutal, keep it well hidden.



PEGASOS SWISS ASSOCIATION

A NEW ASSISTED SUICIDE SERVICE LAUNCHES IN SWITZERLAND

It was great news to hear recently that a new, English-language VAD service had been established in Basel, Switzerland.

While Exit has had long associations with all three groups that operate for foreigners in Switzerland (Dignitas, Lifecircle and EX International), we have often bemoaned the difficulty in using these groups.

The paperwork has always seemed never-ending. The back and forth of emails, often expressed in broken English seemed to create more confusion than not.

It is hard enough for Australians (for instance) to travel half way around the world to die, no one needs to have the experience made more difficult and stressful because of not being able to easily understand the requirements.

For this reason, alone, Pegasus is a welcome addition to the Swiss option.

Pegasus is also welcome because it involves the exact same professionals who looked after Professor



David Goodall (from Perth, May 2018) and Troy Thornton (from Melbourne, February 2019). Based on past experience, Pegasus will offer a thoughtful, accommodating and genuinely friendly service. The fact that they welcome the family pet (and are actively gay-friendly) speaks volumes about their politics. This fresh, open approach is to be congratulated.

That said, Exit fully acknowledges that dying in Switzerland is not everybody's 'cup of tea'. Why would it be. You need to 'time your run' and you essentially die in a strange country.

But it is good to know it's there. It is good to know that it is a very real option if you don't think you can, or you have left it too late to organise things yourself. If you are like David Goodall.

The way the Swiss law operates means that, theoretically, assisted suicide is open to all, as long as you have capacity and do the final action yourself. No other law anywhere in the world comes close to this. For this reason, Switzerland will always be a valued option, even if you never think you'll need it.

The Pegasus website is at: www.pegasos-association.com
Email: contact@pegasos-association.com



The Pegasus clinic in Basel, Switzerland

EXIT CHAPTER NEWS

Every year Exit brings together our chapter coordinators for a meeting in Australia. This year's gathering was held on the Gold Coast.

These annual get-togethers are invaluable from the point of information exchange. They also provide an opportunity for our volunteers to recharge their batteries, ready to head back out into the world to support our members for another year.



*Rob Cane with his
'Lifetime Achievement Award' & Philip
Nitschke*



Exit Chapter Coordinators, Gold Coast, July 2019

One highlight of this year's meeting was the awarding of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Rob Cane from Melbourne. Rob has been the backbone of the Melbourne chapter for the past decade (with helpers of course). With a membership number of 860, he is also one of Exit's 'most senior' members.

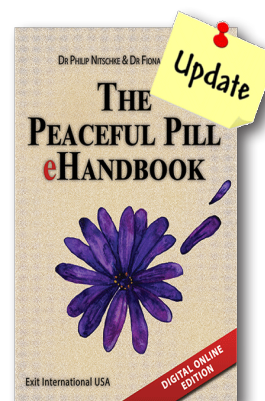
Prior to retirement, Rob was a pilot with Ansett. His life partner, Keith Stott, died in October 2018, aged 92. Exit has been honoured to count Rob as a close friend and ally of the organisation throughout all these years. Exit would not be the group that we are today without him.

PEACEFUL PILL eHANDBOOK UPDATES

The *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* continues to be updated every month. Recent updates include news on the Lethal Salts (inc potentiating & testing) and the new Swiss service, Pegasos.

Subscribers can log in at the Peaceful Pill website by clicking 'log in' in the top menu bar (www.peacefulpill.com)

Or subscribe now for 2 years (US\$85) at the same site. A PPeH subscription also provides access, on approval, to the Exit forums.



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