

## For Your Consideration

### Do you have a living will?

According to recent research (see p. 5, this issue) even though most people want to die at home and do not wish to suffer aggressive medical treatment at the end of life, they wind up dying in hospital, and many in the situation they dreaded most "tethered to machines", unable to avoid respirators, resuscitation, additional chemotherapy and the web of tubes, needles, pumps and other machines that often accompany death in the hospital.

"Medical interventions including artificial hydration, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and assisted ventilation are used to prolong lives, even in the case of terminal illness and being in a vegetative state." Professor Liz Raymond, clinical director of Queensland Health Metro South Palliative Services said one example of a "disturbing scenario" was if an Intra Cardiac Device (ICD) which shocks a person's heart into beating again if it stopped, had been implanted. "A patient may be lying on the table dying and the ICD starts to fire and the body of the person is jumping off the bed from the shock".

If a terminally ill person who's hospitalized stops breathing, they're intubated. If their heart stops, they're resuscitated. If they stop eating, a feeding tube is implanted. Death is delayed but not prevented, the person is still terminally ill with cancer, kidney disease, heart disease, or diseases of the brain. DWD members are aware of these undesirable consequences, but have we done enough to avoid them? Less than 1 percent of Queenslanders have made end-of life decisions, putting families and health care workers under unnecessary stress.

About 10% of our health budget is spent on an oxymoron – preventing inevitable death. So when we are terminally ill and in the last months of life, we must accept our body's decline, face our own mortality, gather our families, and say goodbye. Say no to feeding tubes, ventilators, resuscitators, and the isolation of Intensive Care Units. (Courier Mail, 07/03/10)

What you can do:

1. Fill out Queensland's Advance Health Directive and Enduring Power of Attorney. Put a copy in your medical records, your own files, and with a trusted friend or relative. As there is no official state register, make sure you take these forms with you should you enter hospital or a palliative care setting. Discuss the issue with your family.

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2. Talk to your friends. Share this information
3. Come to our DWDQ workshop on AHD, and plan a workshop for groups you come into contact with, such as Senior Citizen Centres, church groups, retirement villages, bowls clubs, hobby groups, etc. (comments invited, Editor at [newsletter@dwdq.org.au](mailto:newsletter@dwdq.org.au))

#### Next meeting:

#### Advance Health Directive Workshop

Sunday 16th May, 1.15pm – 3.15pm at the Brisbane Square Library, Queen, George & Adelaide Sts. Overview by Liz Stokes. Forms available for sale (at cost). Bring a pen. If you've already filled out an AHD, please attend anyway in order to share your experience with it, and to help others.

#### Can't make it to the next meeting

Purchase an Advanced Health Care Directive from newsagents or download it from the Office of the Adult Guardian's website:

[www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/)

For more information contact:

Office of the Adult Guardian

PO Box 13554 George St

Brisbane 4003

3234-0870 (if in Brisbane)

1300-653-187 (if out of Brisbane)

[adult.guardian@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:adult.guardian@justice.qld.gov.au)

#### Please note:

Most of the news items in this newsletter are gleaned, excerpted, and summarised from the following sources: Exit News and Forum: <http://www.exitinternational.net>; Euthanasia Research and Guidance Organisation (ERGO): [right-to-die@lists.opn.org](mailto:right-to-die@lists.opn.org)

#### Please send:

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## General News

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### First Person in Queensland charged with Assisting Suicide

On April 19 a 48-year-old man will appear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court charged with assisting the suicide of a 76-year-old man on June 20 last year. This is the first time in Queensland a charge has been laid under Section 311 (Assisting Suicide) of the Criminal Code. Many members will remember that there was a two-year police investigation in connection with the suicide of Nancy Crick on the Gold Coast in 2002. Following that investigation, the Police Commissioner, Bob Atkinson, announced on 18 June 2004, 'being present when someone takes their life does not in itself constitute an offence.' That was an important ruling in the fight for VE in this state.

If the defendant in this upcoming trial is found guilty of selflessly assisting an act of self-deliverance, his sentence is likely to be light, in line with precedent from other states. Such an outcome would bolster the argument that trialling all persons accused of assisting a suicide is a wasteful procedure, one abandoned by the Swiss in 1942 by adding just three words to their legislation: *Anyone who, from selfish motives, induces someone to commit suicide or provides assistance to that end will, if the suicide occurs, be punished with up to five years in penitentiary or prison.* Article 115, Swiss Criminal Code – the three added words are underlined.

### Melbourne Arrest

Customs officers at the Melbourne airport intercepted a package from Mexico containing two perfume bottles filled with the liquid drug Nembutal. A woman, 61, has been charged with importing a marketable quantity of a border-controlled substance and faces up to 25 years' jail or a \$550,000 fine.

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/woman-charged-over-suicide-drug-20100204-ng70.html> (The Age, 05/02/10)

### Support For 'SAVES'

Brisbane and Sunshine Coast Branches joined forces to forward a total of \$10,000 to SAVES to help fund publicity in the lead-up to the recent SA Parliamentary election. There were two Independents running on the platform of VE. While neither was elected (nor expected to be) it was hoped to draw votes away from Religious Right candidates who have opposed VE in past parliamentary debates. Just how successful this has been should be known around 7 April.

### South Australia: VE Political Party

Christians for Voluntary Euthanasia, claiming to be the first religious organisation in the world to stand on VE platform, stood for the Legislative Council, to counter the influence of Family First. One of its two candidates, Rev. Craig de Vos,

said it is time for a balanced debate and to help push voluntary euthanasia laws through parliament. "In some cases the best outcome for life is a dignified and good death. At the moment a lot of people don't get that". (ABC News, 03/03/10)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/03/2834951>

### Kevin Rudd Opposed to Right to Die

Kevin Rudd does not believe federal parliament will be asked to make a conscience vote on euthanasia any time soon. And if it were, he would vote against the right to die. He was responding to Melbourne woman Debbie Williams who asked, during the Seven Network's Sunrise program, for his personal view on euthanasia "Could we get the ball rolling for a conscience vote, instead of sweeping this issue under the carpet?" she asked. Australian Greens leader Bob Brown has a private bill before parliament which aims to restore the NT law. (AAP, 12/02/10)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/no-huge-push-for-new-euthanasia-vote-pm-20100212-nvsy.html>

### Dying to Live on the Coast

It is a great place to live and a great place to visit, and Coffs Harbour is also now a great place to die, according to one of Australia's foremost authorities on ageing, Prof. Colleen Cartwright. "It's probably not something you would want to put on tourist brochures but Coffs Harbour really is one of the best places to end your life with dignity." Prof Cartwright heads the Aged Services, Learning, and Research Centre at Southern Cross University. "In my mind prolonging a life full of pain is little more than abuse. We need to understand that sometimes medical intervention merely prolongs death rather than prolongs life. In our residential aged care system people now don't have to go to hospitals to die; they die in their familiar environment rather than the acute care ward of a hospital, a much more dignified option." (Coffs Coast Advocate, 10/02/10)

<http://www.coffiscoastadvocate.com.au/story/2010/02/10/dying-to-live-on-the-coast/>

### Final Exit Network Arrests Update

Arizona: Two (Wye Hale-Rowe and Frank Langsner) of the four persons indicted last May who "helped" Van Voorhis kill herself by sucking in helium through a hose, with an oxygen-eliminating hood snugly over her head, have been charged with manslaughter and conspiracy to commit manslaughter. Hale-Rowe, entering into a plea bargain, has pleaded guilty to a lesser charge, meaning she will testify against Langsner and the other two defendants charged with conspiracy to commit manslaughter. (The Phoenix New Times, 11/01/10)

## General News

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**Georgia:** A local grand jury said four members of the Final Exit Network operated a criminal enterprise that helped people die. An indictment charges the Final Exit Network along with co-founder Thomas "Ted" Goodwin, with violating Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, assisting a suicide and tampering with evidence. An additional unexpected indictment for racketeering (apparently for sending out informational flyers from the Network office) has also been brought against the Final Exit Network as a nonprofit corporation.

Derek Humphry comments, "I welcome this case at last coming to trial (probably early next year) so that the law in the USA can be clarified on whether it is acceptable to help competent adults who are in terminal suffering and wish to die. It is likely to become the most significant case on this particular issue ever tested in the US". (Contributions to the defence fund: Final Exit Network, PO Box 553, Kingston NJ 08528, USA)

### Assisted Suicide for the Elderly

Lawmakers in Holland could soon debate legalizing assisted suicide for those who have reached a certain age, but who do not necessarily have a terminal illness. The Of Free Will campaign has gathered more than 100,000 signatures, which is enough to force a debate, hopefully after national elections scheduled for June 9.

### Canada Consults

The chairperson of a national committee investigating euthanasia, explained they will

## Update on Right-to-Die Legislation

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*There are several ways the law can support exercising choice at the end of life. Some of them seem minor (e.g., living wills) compared to the ultimate goal of legalising voluntary euthanasia, but each is important and worth fighting for along the way. In this regular review of the legal picture around the world, we will attempt to report news of each stage of legislative change as it occurs.*

### England: Assisted Suicide Decriminalised

Final rules set out by the [UK] Crown Prosecution Service will make it clear that those who help others end their lives are unlikely to face court if they acted out of compassion. It marks a legal milestone as the law against assisting suicide is in effect being changed without the involvement of Parliament, on the orders of the Law Lords. (The Daily Telegraph, 20/02/10)

To read the 22 newly-revised guidelines, go to: [http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/assisted\\_suicide\\_policy.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/assisted_suicide_policy.html)

### Scotland: End of Life Choices Bill

A cross-party committee of the Scottish parliament is to investigate legalising assisted suicide after an MSP succeeded in tabling a bill

hear about 30 expert witnesses on "dying with dignity" to prepare a paper for a travelling public consultation. "We want legislation in tune with the wishes of the public. Polls indicate a high percentage of Quebecers favour euthanasia, including doctors." (The Montreal Gazette, 16/02/10)

### Possible 'Death tax' in Switzerland

Patients who travel to Switzerland to die could face a 50,000 Swiss franc (\$53,000) "death tax". Right-wing Swiss politicians, concerned about what they describe as death tourism, want groups such as Dignitas to pay large fines for helping anyone who has not lived in Zurich for at least a year to die. A referendum on the proposal will be held this year. If more than 50 per cent of the electorate votes in favour, it could become law (The Sydney Morning Herald, 24/01/10)

### Vegetative Patient Communicates

A man who was presumed to be in a vegetative state for five years has answered questions using his thoughts alone in a ground-breaking experiment that promises to allow some patients who are "locked in" by brain injuries to communicate. The 29-year-old Belgian was able to reply to simple yes/no questions, such as "Is your father's name Alexander?" by changing his brain activity. Scientists read his answers by studying functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans. The results suggest that at least some (a very small minority so far) VS patients are able not only to hear and understand people, but also to respond mentally in ways that can be harnessed for communication. (The Times, 04/02/10, Mark Henderson, Science Ed)

to allow doctors to end the lives of terminally-ill patients. Margo McDonald, the independent MSP who tabled the bill, signed by 21 MSPs from all four parties, said she wanted the freedom to end her life legally. She has Parkinson's disease. She said the situation where only the wealthy could afford the £3,000-£5,000 to visit Dignitas was "immoral". (The Guardian, 21 Jan 2010)

### Israel: Physician Assisted Suicide Bill Introduced

A private member's bill, modeled on the Oregon law, is being introduced in the Knesset allowing physicians to help terminal patients die. The head of the Israel Medical Association's ethics bureau strongly supports the bill.

## Update on Right-to-Die Legislation

### USA: Right To Assisted Death Confirmed In Third State

The Montana Supreme Court has confirmed a ruling of a lower Montana court-- that Montana residents have the right to request physician aid-in-dying under the state constitution. This law confirms the right of a mentally competent, terminally ill person to request and legally obtain a prescription for a lethal dose of drugs from a physician, meaning that the legal right to physician aid-in-dying is now in full effect in Montana, the third U.S. state to permit the practice. The official text may be found at <http://fnweb1.isd.doa.state.mt.us/idmws/docContent.dll?Library=CISDOCSVR01^doaisd510&ID=003824347>

### Massachusetts: the Fourth State?

Massachusetts could become the fourth US state to legalize elective euthanasia for the terminally ill under a proposed bill whose author died of cancer before he could make his case to the Legislature. The Joint Committee on the Judiciary has begun debating whether to follow the leads of Oregon, Washington State, and Montana, and implement a Death With Dignity law (The Boston Herald 22/02/10).

### Connecticut: "Aid in Dying"

Dennis C. is 72 and suffering from terminal lung cancer. Chemotherapy and radiation have had little effect. When not inundated with morphine or other drugs, he is in great pain. Dennis asked his doctor if he could give him something to help him die. A law passed some 40 years ago states that any person who "intentionally causes or aids another person, other than by force, duress or deception, to commit suicide" is guilty of second-degree manslaughter. There is no exception for doctors.

#### Useful Websites:

[www.lists.opn.org/mailman/listinfo/right-to-die\\_lists.opn.org](http://www.lists.opn.org/mailman/listinfo/right-to-die_lists.opn.org) (to join the ERGO news list digest)

[www.lists.opn.org/pipermail/right-to-die\\_lists.opn.org/](http://www.lists.opn.org/pipermail/right-to-die_lists.opn.org/) (archives of the ERGO news list digest)

[www.dwdv.org.au/newsletters/nl\\_148spring09.pdf](http://www.dwdv.org.au/newsletters/nl_148spring09.pdf)  
(Newsletter from DWDV)

[www.nvve.nl/english](http://www.nvve.nl/english) (website from the Netherlands)

#### Speakers:

Spread the word...Are you a member of, or in touch with a social club? Retirement village? Church group? P&C? We have speakers who will talk about DWDQ, its history, aims and activities. Please phone 1300 733 818 or email [dwdq@vesq.org.au](mailto:dwdq@vesq.org.au) to arrange a guest speaker now, or to put on next year's calendar.

### End of story? Maybe not

Two doctors are asking a Connecticut court to rule that this statute does not necessarily prohibit "aid in dying, a recognized term of medical art," which "may, in the professional judgment of a physician, be a medically and ethically appropriate course of treatment." To read a consideration of the legal questions presented by this case, go to <http://www.ctlawtribune.com/getarticle.aspx?ID=36017>

### West Australia: Living Wills Now Legal

New laws giving adults the right to determine their future medical treatment in a living will came into effect on Feb 15. Health Minister Kim Hames said "This is progressive legislation which will allow people to make important decisions about their health care and lifestyle, in anticipation of a time when they may be unable to make the decisions for themselves. (West Australian, 15/02/10) For more information go to [www.health.wa.gov.au/advancehealthdirective](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/advancehealthdirective)

### West Australia: Euthanasia Conscience Vote

The Greens MLC Robin Chapple will introduce a private members bill allowing West Australians over age 21, when terminally ill with less than two years to live, to request medically assisted euthanasia. The Premier doesn't support euthanasia, but does support "the right of families with their doctors to deal with situations on a case by case basis". Both major parties, as well as the Nationals, have decided to give their members a conscience vote. (By Brian Ross and Ranjan Ray, WAVES)



Q: Why do retirees count pennies?

A: They are the only ones who have the time.

Q: What do retirees call a long lunch?

A: Normal

Q: What do you do all week?

A: Monday to Friday: Nothing.  
Saturday and Sunday, I rest.



#### When Love Fades

A man was sitting on the sofa watching TV when he heard his wife's voice from the kitchen: "What would you like for dinner, Sweetie? Chicken, beef or lamb?"

He said, "Thank you; I'll have chicken." She said, "You're having soup. I was talking to the cat."

## Asking the People

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### Recent Poll in England

The Angus Reid Public Opinion poll said among a representative national sample of 2,004 British adults, 71 percent supported legalizing euthanasia. The poll also found that at least three-quarters believe legalizing euthanasia would establish clearer guidelines for doctors, and 84 percent said it would provide people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain. (UPI London, 02/02/20)

### Austria

Graz Medical University officials said 66 per cent of people they had spoken with had said they would support euthanasia by doctors on patients

## Research Findings

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### Facing End-of-Life Talks

Studies have shown that even though most people want to die at home, most wind up dying in hospital. Dr. Nancy L. Keating, an associate professor of medicine and health care policy at Harvard, surveyed 4,074 doctors who took care of cancer patients, instructing them to imagine one who had only four to six months left, but was still feeling well. Then the doctors were asked when they would discuss the prognosis, whether the patient wanted resuscitation or palliative care, and where he or she wanted to die. (Guidelines for doctors say the discussion should begin when a patient has a year or less to live, allowing them to plan whether they want to do everything possible to stay alive, or to avoid respirators, resuscitation, additional chemotherapy and the web of tubes, needles, pumps and other machines that often accompany death in the hospital.)

Although 65 percent of the doctors said they would talk about the prognosis "now", far fewer would discuss the other issues at the same time: resuscitation, 44%; hospice care, 26%; site of death, 21%.

Dr. Keating explained, "It's easier to say, 'Let's try another round of chemotherapy,' instead of having a serious discussion. Doctors wait until there's just a few weeks left, so dying patients may wind up in exactly the situation they dreaded most, tethered to machines in a hospital instead of being kept comfortable at home in their own beds". (Denise Grady, Jan 11, 2010)

### Helium Inhalation in a Prefilled Environment

In recent years information about suicide with helium has spread rapidly on the Internet, in print, and even on video. Increased awareness means that instead of turning to a physician for aid in dying, some people will terminate their

who requested it, 13 points higher than in a similar study carried out ten years ago.. (The Austrian Independent, 24/02/10)

### Canada

Three-quarters of British Columbians support euthanasia and more than half recommend decriminalizing assisted suicide, according to an Angus Reid Public Poll. The online survey compiled the opinions of 1,003 Canadian adults, with Quebec and B.C. showing the highest support. (The Globe and Mail, 15/02/10)

lives with this method. Although there are many case reports of hypoxic suicide by helium inhalation, little is known about the pathophysiology of this type of death. Ogden et al analysed four videos of assisted suicide by this method. In all cases the suicide succeeded, consciousness was lost in less than 1 min, but in one case death did not occur until more than half an hour had elapsed. (Ogden, R., Am J Forensic Med Pathol, 31:2, June 2010)

[www.amjforensicmedicine.com](http://www.amjforensicmedicine.com)

### Easing Pain for Dying Children

A small but provocative study suggests that doctors may be giving fatal morphine doses to a few children dying of cancer, to end their suffering at their parents' request. The study was based on interviews with parents of 141 children who had died of cancer. One in eight (13%) said they had considered asking about ending their child's life, and 9 percent said they had that discussion with caregivers. Parents of five children said they had explicitly requested euthanasia. "If there was no other option, and the patient is suffering, then why wouldn't you hasten death?" said a Boston-area man whose 5-year-old son died of cancer 11 years ago. (AP Chicago, 02/03/10) (Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, March)

☺ Did you hear about the 83-year-old woman who talked herself out of a speeding ticket by telling the young officer that she had to get there before she forgot where she was going? (From the Sunshine Coast, June Henderson)

## Books, Films, Etc.

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### A Courageous Battle

by Susan Bracken

The author writes, "I would like to inform readers about my non-profit novel to promote dying with dignity. It includes a non-fiction Appendix with essays on advance directives, dying with dignity groups (Ed note: including DWDQ), and scholarly works on end-of-life choices. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) at \$19.95 USD; also available to read for free as a PDF on the author's website [www.susanbracken.ca](http://www.susanbracken.ca)

### Short Documentary Oscar Nomination

One nomination in the short documentary category was "The Last Campaign of Governor Booth Gardner", a portrait of the former governor of the state of Washington who led a campaign on behalf of the state's Death with Dignity Act. (World Right-to-Die news list, Feb 2, 2010)

### The Peaceful Pill eHandbook

January 2010 updates include: Ch 5: Use of facemasks instead of Exit Bags? Necessary to use more than one Balloon Time gas cylinder? Nitrogen, the only totally undetectable method. Ch 8: Anti vomiting drugs, use, dosages, etc. Ch 9: The role of morphine as end of life drug. Ch 12: Changes to mail order Nembutal, current list of the best sources. The Peaceful Pill eHandbook by Nitschke & Stewart, available from [www.peacefulpill.com](http://www.peacefulpill.com)

### Note from Derek Humphry

If you have an Amazon Kindle ebook, you can now get Jean's Way instantly for only .99 cents. (This book is 32 years old, but still being read.) There is also Good Life, Good Death, a memoir, on Kindle books for \$10.00

### Drama

Six Characters in Search of an Author. By Luigi Pirandello. Headlong Theatre. Seymour Centre, Sydney. The new version puts back into this work, for a 21st-century audience, its original challenge to an audience's understanding of what is real by replacing the theatre company with a documentary film company trying to do a story about a dying boy who chooses euthanasia. Which is more authentic: the awkward testimony of the people whose story it is, or the more dramatically powerful reconstructions of the story? (The Australian, 22 Jan 2010)

### Song: "Final Exit"

"The Metal band, Fear Factory, is about to release a new album which closes with a thought provoking song, which I think is one of the best any band has ever done," writes David Fox from the UK. The link to the song: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_iQ56j9QsY&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_iQ56j9QsY&feature=related)

### Letter from a Playwright: Do you want to stage a play?

My play Dr. Banner's Garden features two career women who commit suicide because, now elderly and ailing, they no longer feel useful. Most theatre companies refuse to deal with these issues, but one put it on to an enthusiastic audience. Perhaps you know of theatre groups who would like to offer this play. I am 86, the author of several books and more than 20 plays. Contact: Hugh Aaron [hugh24@roadrunner.com](mailto:hugh24@roadrunner.com)  
URL: [www.StonesPointBooks.com](http://www.StonesPointBooks.com)

### Old Age Rational Suicide

This fifty-page booklet, written by Michael Irwin (see p. 7 in the Oct 09 Newsletter) is now available. We have one hard copy, available to borrow, or we can send it as an attachment by email. (Contact Mary, 3311-1226, 16 Howard St, 4064; or [mannison@optusnet.com.au](mailto:mannison@optusnet.com.au))

### My Mother, My Writing and Me: Memoir

Former journalist lola Mathews writes about her return to writing after a long gap while caring for her elderly mother who was a long-term member of DWDV and gave her children power of attorney to refuse treatment. Despite this precaution, when her mother had a stroke at 95 she was treated, and ended up in a nursing home until she was nearly 100, trapped in a wheelchair, with failing eyesight and increasing dementia. "From time to time she begged us to end it, but there was little we could do." This is a case study of the grey area around 'refusal of treatment,' and the need to make adequate preparations for our end, including the writing of a detailed advance directive and making sure that a copy is given to our loved ones and every health professional who treats us. (Michelle Anderson Publishing, \$24.95) Available in bookshops or direct from [www.michelleandersonpublishing.com](http://www.michelleandersonpublishing.com)

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: To read Dr. Rodney Syme's statement :  
: on Assisted Suicide go to the DWDQ :  
: website. For a printed copy (17 pages) (send :  
: stamps to defray expenses) contact the Ed :  
: (Mary Mannison, 16 Howard St, Paddington, :  
: Qld, 4064, or call 33111226, or for an e-mail :  
: copy contact [mannison@optusnet.com.au](mailto:mannison@optusnet.com.au)) :  
:.....

.....  
: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know :  
: About Aged Care (but were too old to :  
: ask): [www.agedcarecrisis.com](http://www.agedcarecrisis.com) :  
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## The (Compassionate) Front Line

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This issue honours the constant stream of friends and loved ones who put themselves at risk out of compassion for their parents, children, partners, and friends. As Faye Girsh is quoted saying (in the January issue), "it has not just been the courage of doctors which will eventually change the law".

### Mother Cleared of Killing Daughter

A devoted mother helped her daughter, who had been bed-ridden for more than half her life, to overdose on morphine and a cocktail of drugs after a 17-year battle with an illness that had made her life "unimaginably wretched". Lynn who could not speak or swallow and was paralysed from the waist down, had repeatedly attempted suicide. In 1991, when she was just 14, she was struck by a viral illness which left her severely ill and bed-ridden. Food and liquids were given to her through a naso-gastric tube and pain management by a timer-controlled syringe delivering around 210mg of morphine a day. In a "living will" drawn up by a solicitor she asked not to be resuscitated, adding: "I wish it to be understood I fear degeneration and indignity far more than I fear death."

Justice Bean said: "I do not normally comment on the verdicts of juries but in this case their decision shows common sense, decency and humanity which make jury trials so important in a case of this kind. There is no dispute that you were a caring and loving mother and that you considered that you were acting in the best interests of your daughter."

(Times Online, UK, 18/01/10, Steve Bird)(BBC News, 25/01/10):[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/8470572.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/2/hi/uk_news/england/8470572.stm)

### Mother Given Life Sentence

A mother convicted of murdering her disabled son by injecting him with heroin at a Hertfordshire care home has been jailed for life. There were cries of "shame on you" from the public gallery to the jury as the verdicts were read out. She denied murdering her son who suffered brain damage when he fell out of an ambulance. "For Tom to live that living hell - I couldn't leave my child like that. I did it with love in my heart, for Tom, so I don't see it as murder." She must serve a minimum of nine years. BBC News, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/sussex/8479211.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/england/sussex/8479211.stm)

### Man Guilty After Lover's Death

An elderly man has pleaded guilty to being part of a suicide pact that ended with the death of his sick life partner. They had been in a relationship for 30 years. His partner was diagnosed with Alzheimer's eight years ago, after he found himself unable to remember how to craft the handmade lace he had been producing as a hobby for years. His symptoms began with short-term memory loss and later developed into vision and depth perception problems. (The New Zealand Herald, 31/01/10)

### Assisted in Ailing Wife's Suicide

Barrie Sheldon, 77, said he helped his wife, Elizabeth, acquire more than 4g of antidepressants before leaving her one weekend to take an overdose. She had Huntington's disease, a hereditary condition which causes dementia and physical deterioration. In 1982, with her health deteriorating to the extent she would soon not be able to take her own life, they knew the time had come. His decision to speak out leaves him facing the prospect of prosecution and up to 14 years in prison under the Suicide Act 1961. He decided to reveal his full role as he is angry that euthanasia was not available to his wife, and that he was not able to be with her when she took the overdose. "I have a burning resentment of the police, the politicians, and the legal and medical professionals who allowed her birth but didn't give her the possibility of assisted suicide. This is a gross injustice and it has wrecked my life. From time to time it overwhelms me. I should have been with her." (The Guardian 19/02/10)

### I Killed Dying Lover

A BBC presenter has told TV viewers he carried out a mercy killing on a former lover who was suffering from Aids. Ray Gosling, 70, revealed he had smothered the unnamed partner as he lay in hospital "in terrible, terrible pain". Gosling, a freelance award-winning journalist of hundreds of radio and TV documentaries, whose ruffled persona has endeared him to generations of viewers, said he had no regrets about his actions, adding: "When you love someone, it is difficult to see them suffer. We had an agreement, if it got worse, the pain, and nobody could do anything. He was in terrible pain, I was there and I saw it. It breaks you into pieces. Sometimes you have to do brave things and you have to say — to use Nottingham language — buggler the law." The law has responded. "A 70-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder following comments on the BBC's Inside Out program," said Nottinghamshire Police (The Evening Standard 16/02/10)

### Remember DWDQ in your will.

Perhaps you are not in a position to assist your Society now, but a bequest, large or small, in your will can help us when it can no longer help you. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of money to try to influence the legislative system. Phone us for a bequest form.

## In Queensland

### The Gold Coast Support Group

Thank you everyone who attended our last meeting, I think you must have been pleased with the information we passed on to you judging by the interest that was shown at the end of the meeting. Our thanks to Bob, for the breakthrough. We have secured a date in May at the same venue for our next meeting. Don't forget to come along, as after additional research, we have some more information on making the Helium method more reliable than ever. Looking forward to seeing you. Gordon.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 19th May 10am-12noon. Community Rooms. (Above Rockman's), Pacific Fair. Broadbeach. Convenor: Gordon Bell 5536 5997

[gordonb8899@hotmail.com](mailto:gordonb8899@hotmail.com)

### Sunshine Coast Branch: President's Report – March 2010

"Pester a Politician" has been our monthly strategy, targeting all Queensland members of Parliament. We forward any reports highlighting the plight of persons forced to endure unrelievable suffering because there is no legal choice to seek physician assistance to end their distress.

Monthly meetings continue to be well attended. Guest speakers have included Friends of the Pacific and a funeral celebrant who told us about leaving written memories for family members. The committee is preparing for a DVD competition for young people to stimulate their thinking about physician assisted suicide. Together with the Brisbane branch, a cash contribution was sent to SAVES for their advertising budget for the state election.

The Bribie Island support group has been struggling to maintain local interest. At the March meeting several volunteers took on the role of distributing information about DWDQ at their other local meetings. President: Alastair Henderson, 5437-3627

PO Box 5639, Maroochydore 4558 [vesscoast@bigpond.com](mailto:vesscoast@bigpond.com)

### Brisbane Branch

The next General Meeting will be held Sunday 16 May, commencing 1:15 pm. Sandra Milne and Elizabeth Stokes will take members and guests through the Advance Health Directive that applies in Queensland under the Powers of Attorney Act. In particular, they will concentrate on the areas that cause most problems for members as they seek to ensure that they will not be kept alive when death is the best option. Members can download a 24-page, blank ADH at:

[http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/15982/advance-health-directive.pdf](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/15982/advance-health-directive.pdf)

John Todd, President

**NEEDED!** A Volunteer to Help with the Website ([www.dwdq.org.au](http://www.dwdq.org.au)) You do not need to be located in Brisbane. We will provide a copy of DreamWeaver CS4, and help with using it. For info contact Webmaster (Bob) [[dwdq@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dwdq@optusnet.com.au)]

### Meet Members in Your Area

To arrange local get-togethers anytime, call Shirley Gallahawk (Annerley) or Carol (Mt Gravatt). Don't live near them? Volunteer to be a contact person for your neighbourhood. Call Shirley (3848 9367) or Carol (0432 779 817). They'll help you organise it.

### Self-deliverance Workshops, 2010

If, as a member of DWDQ, you do not know how to end your own life quickly, peacefully and painlessly without jeopardy (legal or otherwise) to others, you could learn by attending one of two remaining workshops in 2010: Sunday 6 June and Tuesday 7 September. Contact John Todd (3876 7654) for bookings and details.

Apt Anagrams:

**ELECTION RESULTS:**

When you rearrange the letters:

**LIES – LET'S RECOUNT**

The computer swallowed grandma.  
Yes, honestly it's true!  
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'  
And disappeared from view.

It devoured her completely,  
The thought just makes me squirm.  
She must have caught a virus  
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin  
And files of every kind;  
I've even used the Internet,  
But nothing did I find.

So, if inside your inbox,  
My Grandma you should see.  
Please 'copy', 'scan' and 'paste' her  
And forward her to me

This is a tribute to all the Grandmas who have been fearless and learned to use the Computer.....