

For Your Consideration

A Call to Oppose Internet Censorship

Australia is proposing to introduce a compulsory firewall that filters content based on a blacklist of banned sites. The Censorship Minister Stephen Conroy has stated that all Refused Classification content will be banned: computer games unsuitable for children, information about euthanasia, discussion forums on anorexia, as well as child porn. A site may be refused classification if it links to a site that is refused, which could result in half the internet being blocked. A previous leak to Wikileaks showed that a current list included the website of a dentist. (Excerpted from a post in The Next Web by Duncan Riley, Australian entrepreneur, respected blogger and editor of The Inquisitor).

Reason 1:

Refused Classification category far too broad

The prohibited material includes not just X-rated content but any material that the Classification Board judges will "offend against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults". Critics of the filter point to several examples of web content that could be blocked; for example, pages about safe injecting and sites giving tips on how to create graffiti, as well as web pages giving advice on assisted suicide. Two-thirds of the content listed on the blacklist is perfectly legal to view and access. Conroy has launched an attack on euthanasia websites, which he links to the deaths of teenagers.

<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/thestump/2010/05/25/conroy-well-block-50000-sites/>

Reason 2:

The proposed censorship filter is unworkable and easily bypassed

The Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA) chair, Nicolas Suzor, said he supported educating citizens with ways to protect themselves from governments that blocked access to certain material. "Octogenarian people with varying degrees of computer literacy can get around it quite simply; it just makes you wonder why the Government is spending so much money and effort on such a flawed system. The EFA expects filter circumvention classes, similar to the ones held by Exit International, will become increasingly popular.

http://www.arnnet.com.au/article/342401/efa_mulls_public_filter_bypass_instruction_guide/?fp=16&fpid=1

Reason 3:

Questionable manipulation of the original family-friendly policy

Policy changes have occurred since Labor announced a family-friendly cyber-safety policy before the last election. "Labor's ISP policy will

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prevent Australian children from accessing any content that has been identified as prohibited by ACMA". Chief Executive of the Internet Industry Association Peter Coroneos says, "A lot of the content that families are concerned about—things like violent material, racial hatred material, material which promotes race hate, maybe even just adult content that you wouldn't want your children to see – none of that will be picked up by this filtering solution".

Reason 4:

Why a legislative approach

Senator Conroy is refusing to follow the example of other countries, such as the UK, Canada and New Zealand, by agreeing to limit the scope of the filter to child pornography and by allowing ISPs to filter it out on a voluntary basis. He is determined to legislate. (ABC News, By Quentin McDermott, 10/05/10)(ABC Four Corners)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/10/2894468.htm?section=justin>

(continued page 2)

Don't miss the...



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wed 18 August at 1.15pm

At the Brisbane City Library

Speaker: Survivors of Suicide
Bereavement Support Assn.

(See Details on p.8)

Please send:

Comments and contributions to the Newsletter
Editor: Mary Mannison, 16 Howard St., Paddington,
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For Your Consideration (cont'd)

Reason 5:

A dangerous precedent

The danger here for the United Kingdom, much of Europe, and perhaps even the United States is one of precedent. This country is one of the most free, safest, western democracies in the world. Although we may not be perfect, we don't suffer the police state that monitors citizens via CTV in the UK, nor do we suffer from onerous laws and the risk of false imprisonment like the United States. What we may be, though, is a Pandora's box for Western democracies. Once you open that box here, the rest may well follow.

<http://thenextweb.com/au/2010/02/05/afraid-internet-censorship-australia-live>

Reason 6:

Even though easy to circumvent, some will miss out on info they deserve to have

Websites associated with self deliverance are expected to be refused classification. While some members of right-to-die groups are busy learning how to hack through the censorship filter, others, who are simply trying to gain information when they need it, may not realise there are ways around the filter. "It's not to do with Exit. The issue is wider," said Ken, one of the participants in a how to hack workshop. "I see it [the Australian Communications and Media Authority which will administer the filter] as George Orwell's Ministry of Truth." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 06/04/10) <http://bit.ly/a7lvU7>

Reason 7:

It's anti democratic

The proposed filter would make Australia one of the strictest internet regulators among the world's democracies, with some critics claiming it will put the country in the same league as China. While Google accepted there must be some limits on internet content, it condemned

the Government's filtering approach as heavy-handed. "We have a bias in favour of people's right to free expression". As part of its assault on internet censorship, the US government has weighed in on the debate. "Our main message is that we remain committed to advancing the free flow of information which we view as vital to economic prosperity and preserving open societies globally," Michael Tran, a US State Department spokesperson, said.

Reason 8:

Yet another drain on your income

The most reliable way of circumventing the filter is to pay a Virtual Private Network (VPN) provider a monthly fee for their services. VPNSecure.me, a provider of encrypted Web proxy services, charges just \$US8 per month for a service that will allow Australians to circumvent the filter's access restrictions. Its Web page reflects the company's new marketing strategy with the statement that the product will "Bypass the Australian internet censorship from conroy (sic)" To say nothing of the taxpayer's contribution to the \$21,000 million dollar program.

<http://apcmag.com/targeting-filter-vpn-providers-practice-aussie-accents.htm>

<http://www.getup.org.au/campaign/TearDownTheFirewall>

Final thought: Mark Newton, an engineer with ISP internode, said: "*Censorship will not catch a single pedophile, will not cause a single image to disappear from the internet, will not protect a single child.*"

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write to the Censorship Minister Stephen Conroy and tell him what you think about the proposed legislation. Send a copy to the Prime Minister.

General News

Protest Rally in Melbourne

Around 200 people were at Melbourne's National Day of Action against the government's internet filter. Various interest groups gathered outside the State Library where bananas were given as a prize to protesters with the best sign. The Greens Party, Sex Party, Pirate Party, Exit International, Electronic Frontiers Australia and Socialist Alternative were all represented. Each gave reasons as to why they believed the Government's plans for a mandatory filter of the internet should not go ahead. Greens candidate for the Senate Dr Richard Di Natale said the party would be proposing the government "dump" the proposal.

Try Thailand

Cheap flights and the ease of obtaining preferred suicide drug Nembutal from veterinary clinics in Bangkok means right-to-

die group Exit International is recommending drug-buying missions to Thailand over Mexico or Peru. Buying the illicit barbiturate has become so common that one Thai vet supply shop reportedly has a sign in the window that reads: "Welcome Australians buying vet supplies". (*The Sunday Times*, Perth, 20/03/10)

Let's Advertise!

Final Exit Network USA has begun the roll-out of billboards to help raise public awareness and promote a dialogue on the right to die. The first board appears in San Francisco, and others will follow in New Jersey and Florida. The message is simply, "My Life, My Death, My Choice," with the organization's contact information. (*The Sacramento Bee*, 16/06/10) More information is available from their Web site: <http://www.finalexitnetwork.org> E-mail to info_at_finalexitnetwork.org

General News (cont'd)

No Conviction for Drug Carrier

A Melbourne cancer patient who imported the euthanasia drug Nembutal has avoided conviction after a court heard she was motivated only to relieve the suffering of others. Her barrister said what differentiated her circumstances from others was that her "sole motivation for the commission of the offence was born as a result of her kindness, humanitarianism and a desire to relieve the suffering of a fellow human being". She had previously imported the drug for herself and her husband, both in remission for breast and bowel cancer. (*The Age*, 16/04/10)

South Australian Nurses for VE

A recently formed group, SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying, supports legislation that 'enables choices in the way a person wishes to die, including the choice of voluntary euthanasia', announces spokesperson Sandy Bradley. In recognition of the pivotal role that nurses have in caring for the dying, Ms Bradley stated 'It is time for us to have our voices heard in this debate'. The group will be working in coordination with 'South Australian Doctors Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia' and 'Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia'. Email: sandrabradley2@bigpond.com

Australia – Internet Censorship

The Australian government is preparing to introduce new legislation that will force internet service providers to block a blacklist of "refused classification" websites, in an attempt to clamp down on pornography and websites used by criminals. Google has refused to bow to a request by the Australian government to censor videos on YouTube, saying the move would stifle public debate on important issues such as euthanasia and drug use. YouTube's own guidelines already block videos featuring sex, violence, bestiality and child pornography. But under the "refused classification" rules, videos featuring subjects as diverse as euthanasia, drug use and graffiti, would also be banned.

New Law in England

A recent ruling that a man will not be prosecuted for putting a bag over his wife's head as she ended her life with helium has hit the news. Previously the Crown Prosecution Service ruling had been seen to cover cases where someone 'assisted' by facilitating the journey to Dignitas. There is a clear difference. Nevertheless, the CPS has ruled that although there is sufficient evidence in both cases, it is not in the public interest to prosecute. (Commentary by Chris Docker, EXIT, Scotland UK)

Ireland

Exit International is setting the first advocacy group of its kind in Ireland which will be headed by Dublin man Tom Curran who said it would be a source of information and support

to people interested in learning more about euthanasia and assisted suicide. He said people had "a right to access information". (*The Sunday Business Post Online*, 16/05/10)

Death with Dignity House

A Portland psychiatrist, plans to open a home where terminally ill Oregonians can kill themselves under the state's Death with Dignity law. The Oregon Department of Human Services reports 59 people used the law to end their own life in 2009. Fifty-five different doctors wrote lethal prescriptions. Still, Dr. Weisberg believes services are needed including catering, security, video taping, music, flowers, bring your family and pets, and for an additional \$1,200--three hours with the psychiatrist and his therapy dog. The total package carries a price tag of \$5,000. A former state lawmaker is not impressed. "It's the commercialization of death with dignity. It degrades what's going on." He says most people want to die at home, surrounded by their families. (22/06/10)

<http://www.kgw.com/news/Death-with-Dignity-house-planned-in-Sellwood-96938714.html>

Dutch Group's Membership Rises

The NVVE has now more than 111,000 members (*Relevant*, Magazine of Right to Die-NL (NVVE), 36:2, May 2010). (*Ed Note: We have a long way to go*)

Dignitas Update:

For a recent update on services provided by Dignitas in Switzerland, contact The Editor.

Join DWDQ

Send \$15 with your name and address to the Treasurer: Gill MacCormick, PO Box 432, Sherwood, QLD, 4075

NEEDED!

A Volunteer to Help with the Website (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

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.

Update on Right-To-Die Legislation

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.

Canada: Assisted suicide voted down

The Canadian House of Commons has rejected (228–59) legislation to permit assisted suicide. Lalonde, MP from Montreal said it's time to allow terminally ill people in intolerable pain to die gently in a manner of their own choosing, but MPs were concerned it would take the country down a "slippery slope" in which severely disabled or dying people could be euthanized without their consent. (CBC News, 21/04/10)

Connecticut: Follow-up from April Newsletter

A Superior Court judge has rejected a request from two doctors who sought to prescribe lethal medication to terminally ill, mentally competent patients who asked for help to die peacefully. The judge said the matters raised should be addressed by the legislature, not the courts. The lawsuit sought a court ruling to declare that the statute against helping someone commit suicide would not apply to physicians helping terminally ill patients end their lives. Doing so was not suicide, but "aid in dying". Suicide is a choice of whether to die or not. Aid in dying involves not whether a person will die, but when, and how much pain and suffering the patient must endure first. (The Hartford Courant, 08/06/10) More info at: http://www.compassionandchoices.org/act/legal_work/Blic k

Germany: Life Support

The Federal Court of Justice has ruled that it is not a criminal offence to cut off the life support of a dying person if that person has given their consent. It acquitted a lawyer who had advised the daughter of a comatose woman to cut off her feeding tube. The mother, in her seventies, fell into a coma in 2002 and had been in a vegetative state for five years when her daughter removed the feeding tube. (News website Spiegel Online)

Northern Territory: Anniversary

May 25th was the 15-year anniversary of parliament passing the Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill. Former chief minister Marshall Perron said the law was a world-first, and had been expected to have a flow-on effect around the country. But the legislation was overturned by the federal government shortly thereafter. Mr Perron said that he was disappointed the Territory's politicians were not lobbying the Commonwealth to support the Greens' Bill to repeal the Commonwealth's ban on voluntary euthanasia, adding that there had been 11 separate attempts to introduce similar laws around the country, which had all been

defeated. "But they are only a couple of votes away from success in South Australia." (26/05/10)

Tasmania: Euthanasia May Be Legalised

Tasmania may become the first Australian state to legalise euthanasia after a surprise announcement in late June by Attorney-General Lara Giddings. She used her parliamentary budget reply speech to unveil progressive plans for law reform in Tasmania in the next four-year term of the Labor-Greens government. It included an unexpected decision to reintroduce a voluntary euthanasia proposal to Parliament. (NT News, 24/06/10) Human rights lawyer and Mercury columnist Greg Barns likened not legalising voluntary euthanasia to the prisoner abuse that occurred at the US's Abu Graib and Guantanamo Bay prisons. "We, as Tasmanians, say we are appalled at the degrading treatment of human beings in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Graib, but it is OK for people to be stripped of their dignity when they have a terminal illness and are at their most vulnerable." (Hobart Mercury, 23/03/10)

South Australia: Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 2010

As part of ongoing legislative activity in the SA Parliament, the Hon Dr Bob Such (Ind) is introducing a new Bill in the House of Assembly. The Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 2010 is on the Notice Paper to be reintroduced when SA Parliament.



Take life with a pinch of salt—a wedge of lime, and a shot of tequila.

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 to arrange a guest speaker now, or to put on next year's calendar.

When you vote...remember the Greens have been instrumental in introducing right-to-die legislation in four Australian states.

Research Findings

Requests for Euthanasia

The number of requests for euthanasia in the Netherlands has not risen since an act to decriminalise it came into force in 2002. The finding comes in a study by the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (NIVEL), published in the *British Journal of General Practice*.

There appears to have been little change in the reasons patients give for requesting euthanasia, such as intolerable pain or loss of dignity.

The act doesn't appear to have created a "euthanasia hype", say the researchers, because of the strict criteria it sets.

NIVEL recommends that euthanasia should be included in a general practitioner's training. Nursing homes and hospitals should publish policies on euthanasia so patients are able to take it into consideration when choosing their care provider. The researchers say that one benefit of the 2002 act is that it removes any need for secrecy regarding euthanasia. (Radio Netherlands Worldwide, 08/04/10)

Suicide Risk for Vets

Vets are four times more likely than the general population to take their own lives, a report has revealed. The researchers, from the University of Southampton, suggested that different attitudes to life and death, as a result of vets being involved in putting down animals, may partly explain why they are more prone to suicide. They analysed studies looking at suicide in vets and other professions.

The study found that vets also had ready access to lethal drugs, and knew how to use them to take their own lives. "The veterinary profession's role in providing animal euthanasia and so facilitating a 'good death', may normalise suicide, with death perceived as a rational solution to intractable problems," the report said. (By Lyndsay Moss, *The Scotsman*, 26/03/10)



Don't get your knickers in a knot. It solves nothing and makes you walk funny

Books, Films, Etc.

"Imperfect Endings: A Daughter's Tale of Life and Death" By Zoe FitzGerald Carter

Zoe Carter's life with her husband and daughters takes an unexpected detour when her glamorous, independent-minded mother decides she's tired of living with Parkinson's disease. Zoe finds herself increasingly drawn into her mother's "exit plans". "Imperfect Endings" is the uplifting story of a woman determined to die on her own terms and the family who has to learn to let her go. (Simon & Schuster, March 2010, \$25, also available in [eBook](#)).

"So Much for That" By Lionel Shriver

Lionel Shriver (known for her award-winning "We Need to Talk about Kevin") looks at the challenges faced by people dying from a terminal illness and how they deal with it. The novel is about a man whose dreams of a comfortable retirement are dashed when finds that his wife is dying from the fast-growing cancer mesothelioma. The author believes current medical advances give people false hope that they can beat terminal cancer if they spend enough money on treatments. "Rather than drugging people into a stupor, they should be given a chance to reflect on life, address those relationships, spend a little bit of time with those they love." She criticises the health care system for technically keeping people alive, while denying them a dignified death. (Harper Collins, \$32.99)

"Final Exit" Updated version

There is a new, updated printing of 'Final Exit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying' by Derek Humphry. (If you already have the 3rd edition (2002) plus the Addendum, you do not need this new printing.) Price remains at \$17 USD plus shipping; eBook is \$25 USD. Order Final Exit 3.1 from the ERGO Bookstore <http://www.finalexit.org/ergo-store> Send check or money order to ERGO, 24829 Norris Lane, Junction City, New York, USA.

Completed Life Booklet

The last Newsletter referred to a booklet about "Old Age Rational Suicide" written by Michael Irwin. Some of you asked to borrow it, or to receive an email attachment of the text. A Right to Die group in the Netherlands (NVVE) has announced a booklet on the same topic written by the Completed Life Movement. Some of the questions it addresses are: Is 'finished with life' and 'unduly suffering in life' equal to 'completed life'? Why is the subject relevant now? Can people with a life-threatening disease possibly consider their life completed? Does the 'Drion pill' (last-will-pill) exist?

If you wish to read their discussion of this issue, contact The Editor.

New Euthanasia Blog

If you missed the article in *Q Weekend*, May 1, by Trent Dalton, about John Todd's Workshop, contact the editor for an email/or print copy. <http://exiteuthanasia.wordpress.com/>

Books, Films, Etc.

TV Movie, 'You Don't Know Jack'

In 1990, Dr. Jack Kevorkian (aka Dr. Death) astonished the world as he took the end of life debate head-on with his "Mercy Machine" and performed his first assisted suicide. One of the most polarizing figures in modern American history, Kevorkian (Al Pacino) and his allies – sister Margo (Brenda Vaccaro), friend and medical supplier Neal Nicol (John Goodman), Hemlock Society activist Janet Good (Susan Sarandon), and defense attorney Geoffrey Fieger (Danny Huston) dedicated themselves to a cause fraught with legal and ethical hurdles, not to mention the real possibility of long-term imprisonment. Great care was taken to treat the subject matter with dignity and truthfulness, backed by extensive research and interviews with the individuals who were involved, and with Jack himself (Gina Carbone, HBO Examiner, 07/04/10) <http://www.examiner.com/x-43053-HBO-Examiner~y2010m4d7-Al-Pacino-stars-as-Dr-Death-in-HBOs-You-Dont-Know-Jack>

More about the Fear Factory song "Final Exit"

The band explains, "We are very happy fans are loving the song, for it is one that touches upon the importance of the freedom of choice and personal liberty that all human beings should be allowed. Humanity needs the choice of dignified self-deliverance from continual, painful treatments for debilitating diseases."

Record from: www.candlelightrecordsusa.com/store

New Movie, Director's Note

"I want to inform you of our film, 'A Happy Ending', which is set to premiere in September in New York City. In making the film, our main goal was to force the issue of euthanasia into popular culture and to open the debate to people of our generation, most of whom have yet to ask themselves the What If question. Ross Hockrow, Director. (06/05/10) See following websites for more info:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1643223/>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=105175619513373>

<http://therighttopeace.blogspot.com/>

Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF)

Three new films dealing with the dilemmas of rational suicide and assisted suicide were shown at the EIFF: "Third Star". "Pelican Blood" "And Everything Is Going Fine". More details in the October Newsletter.

Deathline, by Jane Aiken Hodge.

Jane Aiken Hodge won fans worldwide with a string of historical romances, each guaranteed to have a satisfyingly resolved final chapter. But after more than 40 bestselling novels there was a dramatic shift in her final title, *Deathline*, which explored the contemporary theme of

terminal care. Six years after its publication the author's own ending was far from romantic or straightforward.

After taking an overdose of pills the 91-year-old novelist lay in bed, alive but unconscious, for four days, watched by her daughters, before she finally died. Her daughter, Jessica Hodge, described the dilemma faced by the family and the "inhuman" legal position they endured while awaiting a decision on whether anyone will be prosecuted.

Hodge, the American-born daughter of the poet Conrad Aiken, moved to Britain aged 3 and studied at Somerville College, Oxford, and Radcliffe College, Massachusetts. As well as her fiction she was also a biographer of Jane Austen and Georgette Heyer.

Her younger sister, the popular children's author Joan Aiken, whose books include *The Whispering Mountain* and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, died in January 2004. Later that year Hodge wrote a letter to a newspaper in which she said: "All this mealy-mouthed talk about the hazards of living wills seems to be making a tidy little death more difficult to achieve. A depressing thought."

Ms Hodge said: "In a humane society it should be possible for someone in their right mind who, whether through age or illness, wants to die now rather than later, to be able to discuss this wish and to helped to fulfil it rather than, like my brave mother, having to do it in isolation and without being sure if it is going to work." (*The Times*, London, 29/07/09)



"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." Oscar Wilde



"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my first play. Bring a friend if you have one." George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill

"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second - if there is one." Winston Churchill

The Front Line

For one reason or another, we can't all be making major contributions towards increasing options at the end of life, but we do support the ones who do!

England, Testing New Guidelines

The October 2009 Newsletter reported that a draft policy clarifying the circumstances under which a person could be prosecuted for helping someone kill themselves had been released by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Factors in favour of prosecution included that the "suspect was unknown to the victim and assisted the victim to commit suicide by providing specific information" and that the "suspect gave assistance to more than one such victim".

Dr Irwin, former chairman of VES and founder member of Friends At The End, has written a letter to the DPP, effectively inviting criminal charges. He admits he helped someone suffering from advanced pancreatic cancer to commit suicide three years ago, and that he accompanied two other previous strangers to

Dignitas, and paid £1,500 of the clinic's bill. He wrote, "I am a retired GP. I believe that physicians should always act in a compassionate manner. And, I know that the CPS and the British legal system handles cases of assisted suicide in a compassionate way." Dr Irwin, told *The Sunday Telegraph*, "I may have broken the law but it's a weak, non-law. I want to highlight the two-tier system where 'assisted suicide' is only available to those who can afford it. That, to me, is a form of hypocrisy."

(By Andrew Alderson, Chief Reporter *The Sunday Telegraph*, 25/04/10)

Since then, on 25 June, the DPP has said that although there is sufficient evidence to prosecute, it would not be in the public's interest and no further action should be taken against them.

Compassion and Care

Couple Die Together

Richard and Jo Hyse went to bed for the last time in their Oswego (New York) house of 48 years. They were going into an assisted living facility. Richard, 89, was an economics professor emeritus at the State University at Oswego and Jo, 86, was a watercolor artist with a local gallery named in her honor

In their last six months, the couple's health deteriorated rapidly. Jo became depressed by her lack of short-term memory. Richard had spine problems that made it difficult to walk. He couldn't get into the bathtub on his own. He could no longer exercise.

Richard committed suicide by taking a mixture of drugs. Before that he shot Jo through the back of her head. (*The Post-Standard*, 18/04/10)

Couple Suffers Violent Death

Today family, friends and neighbors who loved Joan and Thomas Vanacore are grieving their tragic deaths and wondering how it might have been different. The Vanacores, known by the community as loving people, died violently — because Connecticut law denied them the peaceful, humane choices they deserved. The Vanacores had terminal illnesses. Thomas, 73, had advanced cancer and Joan, 70, was dying of Alzheimer's. He shot his wife in the head and then turned the gun on himself. (*The Hartford Courant*, 16/05/10) (For commentary on this story by the President of Compassion and Choices, ask the Editor.)

Emphysema Suicide

Allan Peters, 64, hanged himself from a local bridge after delivering a note to the *Mountain Democrat* (California) newspaper which detailed a life made unbearable by emphysema, a lung disease that results in obstruction, and

eventually, destruction of the airways, which causes the lungs to transfer less oxygen to the bloodstream. Many advanced emphysema patients are forced to use oxygen tanks to increase breathing volume. "I really cannot convey to you how very hard it was even to try to take very deep breath," As debilitating as pain can be, his doctor said, it is not the leading reason why terminal patients seek assisted suicide. "It's loss of dignity. One of the reasons why the people of Oregon approved the Death With Dignity law is because it does act to prevent these types of violent and tragic suicides." (By Sam McManis)

An Alternative Ending

I am 72 years old. I spent my working years as a large-animal vet, farmer, and schoolteacher. I had a very healthy life, until eight years ago. I was feeding the cows and calves on our ranch, carrying a hay bale in the fields, when I passed out. I remember waking up wondering what had happened. My wife took me to the hospital, and tests revealed that I had brain cancer. Surgery removed much, but not all, of the cancer. I have undergone a series of radiation treatments which have taken a toll on my mind and body.

It's becoming clear the cancer is not going away and my life is nearing its end. I've accepted my death as approaching and unavoidable, and my family and I have had a long time to deal with our grief. I approach the end of my life with a clear mind. I was heartened when the Montana Supreme Court decided I have a choice on how I am allowed to die. Even though I don't know whether I would ultimately take medication to end my life peacefully, I'd like to have the choice. (Steve Johnson, *Great Falls Tribune* Montana, 10/05/10).

In Queensland

The Gold Coast Support Group

Thanks to all who attended our May meeting, and sorry that we missed out on Robert's update on the Helium process, but he wasn't too well. I am pleased to report he is feeling better and raring to go for our August meeting.

John Edge would like to add his thoughts from our last meeting, so here they are. "The May meeting revealed a high level of interest in Self Deliverance, resulting in attendees supporting a call to keep up the important work." At our next meeting on the **18th of Aug.** the group will continue to highlight the need to "be prepared" by exploring new ideas, whilst upgrading current equipment to take advantage of information gleaned from real life experiences. The price we must pay for demanding our right to choose, is our constant vigilance ensuring our chosen method is up to the task.

We look forward to seeing you in August. Gordon.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 18th Aug. 10am-12noon. Community Rooms. [Above Rockman's], Pacific Fair, Broadbeach.

Sunshine Coast Branch

The **Bribie Island Support Group** meeting was well attended with the guest speaker, Belinda, from Senior's Enquiry Line giving plenty of useful advice about the services that the organisation has to offer. The **Maroochydore meetings** have been also been addressed by Belinda, as well as Lyn Auger advising about ways to avoid falls and injury, and Rebecca Bingham, a registered nurse and fitness instruction, showing bone strengthening exercises for seniors.

Christians Supporting VE has our support so add your signature to their membership list (there's even a category for supporters who don't wish to reveal their religious beliefs). Effective lobbying of politicians to reform the law regarding DWD requires large numbers of members; the greater the numbers, the greater the chance that politicians will recognize community views. To sign up, pick up an application form from our library table, or email Christians for VE@westnet.com.au or go to www.christiansforve.org.au.

Some members attended Peter Slipper's Seniors' Forum where speakers included Dr Chris Davis (past president AMA Qld), David Wise, solicitor, and Senator Bronwyn Bishop, Shadow Minister for the Aged. An enlightening talk to John-Paul Langbroek made it clear that VE/DWD is not a matter of any importance at all to him. **The Sunshine Coast Annual General Meeting** will be held on **22nd**

September 2010 due to the absence of several members during August. **[All Members please note:** Persons requiring a receipt of payment of membership fees please include a return stamped addressed envelope.]

Brisbane Branch

LAST SELF-DELIVERANCE WORKSHOP FOR 2010 will be held Tuesday 7 September, 1:45 - 3:15pm. Members attending will learn how to end their own lives, quickly, peacefully and painlessly without legal jeopardy to themselves or anyone else. All wishing to attend must register with John Todd, telephone 3876 7654.

Advance Health Directive Forms available for \$7 (paying in stamps is okay but only use 60c. or \$1.20 stamps). Send to Gill McCormack, Unit 30, 55 Thorn St., Kangaroo Pt, Qld, 4169.

Apology: The Brisbane City Council staff have apologised profusely for forcing an early closure to our last meeting. Although the library was closing, we did have the room booked till 3.30pm.

AGM details: In accordance with the Constitution, 3 main positions will become vacant

Currently, the positions are filled by: President John Todd; Secretary Anyse Horman; Treasurer Gill McCormack. Both John and Gill are prepared to continue, and are nominated for the forthcoming year. You can nominate other members if you wish.

DESPERATELY SEEKING SECRETARY

The position of Secretary will be vacant as Anyse is now helping with coordination (and thanks Anyse for the great work you did as Secretary). We will need nominations prior to the AGM so we can advise members who is standing for the position. ***(Please volunteer your interest...we will offer whatever assistance is needed.)*** You can contact the Committee by post, phone or email. PO Box 432 Sherwood 4075, 3379 5239
anyse.horman1@bigpond.com

Membership: The Brisbane Branch reports 20 new members in just the last two months! How do people hear about us? From the radio, newspaper articles, stalls at rallies, and from **you**, the membership - keep spreading the word, and keep sending those Letters to the Editor!

A huge "thank you" to all those members who include extra donations with their fees, or even separately. It is because of these donations that we are able to keep our fees at only \$15.