

# Dying with Dignity ACT Inc.

Everyone deserves a peaceful death

info@dwdact.org.au | www.dwdact.org.au | PO Box 55 Waramanga ACT 2611

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The committee has been preparing for the election on 15 October and for the next General meeting. We have been investigating the possibility of running an advertisement advising people to vote for a minor party of their choice that has a pro euthanasia policy and placing the major party of their choice second. This seems to be the only way to send a message to the major parties that we are tired of waiting for them to address the issue of euthanasia. If they won't address it they should know that we are prepared not to vote for them or at least put them in a position where they have to fight to maintain their political status. In doing this we will be following a growing trend of dissatisfaction with the major parties and their arrogant attitudes to the concerns of ordinary people. We encourage you to follow our advice and encourage your friends and relatives to do the same.

The date of the next General Meeting has had to be rescheduled because our speaker Frances Coombes was unable to make our original date. Frances is the President of SAVES (South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society). She has been involved with SAVES for the last twenty years and has been the activist behind the scenes of many bills tabled by a variety of politicians in South Australia, including Independents, Greens and Labor. The theme of our meeting is the political process involved in making change from the South Australian perspective. I believe we should get inspiration and advice from Frances for our own political process. By the time she speaks to us we will know whether the latest bill tabled in the South Australian parliament by Steph Keys, which has the support of both the premier and the opposition leader has passed through at least one of the houses of the South Australian Parliament. I hope we will be able to open a bottle of champagne to celebrate with Frances if the bill does pass.

The meeting will be a **Public Meeting** at the **Hughes Community hall on 24 November at 2.00 p.m.** It will **not** be on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October as previously advertised. We are advertising the meeting through the COTA newsletter which has a circulation of 600 members so I advise you to get to the hall early to get your seat.

I attended the speech at The Press Club by Andrew Denton which I am sure some of you will have seen on television. He spoke well about the range of difficulties i.e. the suffering many people endure when they die, the opposition to change, the difference between his approach and Philip Nitschke's and the formation of his new organization, *Go Gentle Australia*. This organization is receiving the backing of many Australian organizations including YourLastRight.com which has encouraged the Clem Jones Group to support *Go Gentle Australia* financially.

In Victoria the parliament has received its report into end of life issues but Dr Rodney Syme reported at the last YourLastRight.com meeting that he did not expect legislation to be debated for another eighteen months which he said is 'too long'. I think we would all agree with him.

In Tasmania it's expected that another bill will be tabled by Lara Giddings and the new Greens leader before the end of the year. It seems that some of the Liberals are more in favour of a bill on assisting people to die and that the very right wing religious people failed to be re-elected so there is hope that in these three states some movement may occur within the next year or so.

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At the international level the new President Sean Davison of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies is receiving the support of Desmond Tutu who has offered to speak to the United Nations Human Rights committee about euthanasia and the right to die with dignity. The Federation is investigating how to find a way to speak to the UN at the moment. If anyone can have some influence globally on this issue Desmond Tutu should be able to. However he is now very old and the meeting needs to be set up quickly. The next World Federation conference will be held in South Africa in 2018. DWDACT Inc. is a member of the Federation so any of our members is entitled to attend. We will keep you informed about the details of the conference when we receive them.

I am still pursuing the idea of taking a case to the Supreme Court on the grounds of incompatibility of Section 17 the Crimes Act legislation with our Human Rights Act. I have a potential litigant and have received medical advice. I have discussed the possibility of getting financial and media backing from *Go Gentle Australia* with Dr Rodney Syme and am discussing the legal advice we need with Bernard Collaery who has offered us legal support. This needs constant attention and has many ways in which it could fall in a hole but I believe it is worth pursuing because a similar case in Canada has led to law reform there. Millions of people in Canada now have assistance to die. If there is anyone who thinks they might be able to help with this please let me know.

At our last committee meeting Jack White submitted his resignation as treasurer. Jack's eyesight has deteriorated to a point where it is difficult for him to continue in the role. Jack has put the administration of our finances on a professional footing which was badly needed. Our finances are now in a reasonable shape for an organization of about 130 members. It would be good to have more money to pursue our political goals however we will do what we can, given the human and financial resources available to us. I want to thank Jack for his professionalism, dedication and commitment to the Dying with Dignity movement and to DWDACT Inc. in particular.

The committee approved that Tony Whelan our current secretary would move into the treasurer's role from November and we are welcoming a new committee member Judith Barnes into the position of secretary.

I hope to see you at the meeting at the **Hughes Community Centre hall in November on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 2.00 p.m.**

Jeanne Arthur  
President  
Dying with Dignity ACT Inc.