

**Bulletin No 13**

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In my last Bulletin I was optimistic that we might have a legal breakthrough via The Australian constitution which states that *the Commonwealth may not make law imposing religious observances*. The committee received advice from barristers Greg Barns and John B. Lawrence SC who were provided with an explanatory statement and material from Kirsty Easdale, Senior Lawyer with Meyer Vandenberg Lawyers. We were disappointed to find that the barristers did not address the issue we asked them to look at. It appears that no-one has made a challenge in the High Court on the basis of law made by the Federal parliament that imposes religious observances. So we have sought further help from another lawyer who has agreed to approach contacts with more constitutional law expertise. We are still waiting for that to occur.

I have since spoken to the presidents of both the NSW and Victoria DWDs about our approach because it could have implications for all states and territories if it were successful. If the Federal Parliament's Euthanasia Laws Act was found to impose religious observances the law that is similar to it in the states and territories would have to change in order to be consistent with the Federal law. Federal law would have to change to ensure that it did not impose religious observances.

Both presidents stressed that they were involved with the presentation of bills in their respective parliaments and were unwilling to be involved in a new approach at this stage. You will be aware through the emails from Dr Max Sutherland that bills are coming into both parliaments this year. So this is worth watching; especially the Victorian bill which has been so carefully shepherded by a thorough investigation across the state into end of life matters. The NSW bill has also come from an across political committee so it too in a different way has been thoughtfully developed.

DWDACT will be holding a **public meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00 p.m. at the Hughes Community Centre**. We have been fortunate to obtain Dr Rodney Syme as our speaker. Rodney has been involved in the dying with dignity movement for many years. He has bravely defied Victorian authorities by informing them that he has given Nembutal to dying patients and this year was successful in receiving the support of medical authorities who stated that the provision of Nembutal to a dying patient is part of palliative care.

We hope to see you there.

Jeanne Arthur, President  
Dying with Dignity ACT  
24 September 2017