

Dying with Dignity ACT Inc.

Everyone deserves a peaceful death

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This 2018 year is ending ambiguously for the ACT Dying with Dignity movement. The pursuit of Federal politicians in Australia to justify their passing the Euthanasia Laws Act which began in April 2 years ago has born some fruit at the international level. I drew the attention of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies to the Vatican's Declaration on Euthanasia and after a long time of debating the substance, length and wording of a letter to Pope Francis it was finally published on the World Federation website recently. It has also been distributed to other right to die organizations around the world with a link to the actual text. I have attached it to the end of this Bulletin for your interest.

The purpose of the letter is primarily to inform our members of the influence of the Pope in the affairs of other nations and how the Catholic and other religious politicians in our parliaments are having an impact on our laws. In my last Bulletin I gave you the evidence we now have that at least one senator in the Australian Federal Parliament was prepared to declare his reason for voting no to the Restoring Territory Rights Bill this year was his allegiance to the Catholic Church over and above his allegiance to the Australian Constitution which states that the Federal Parliament may not make laws which impose religious observances. To remind you of what I wrote in the last Bulletin I am restating it here.

In the recent debate on the Restoring the Territory Rights Bill Senator Williams the New South Wales Nationals Whip in the Senate stated I rise to speak on the Restoring Territory Rights (assisted Suicide Legislation) Bill 2015 and make it clear that, as I said to my parish priest, Father Joe, last Saturday week, I will not be supporting the bill.

I am sure it is likely that Senator Williams has read the Pope's *Declaration on Euthanasia* which to support its argument draws on two thousand year old teachings of St Paul that say " If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8 cf. Phil. 1:20). The Declaration states the following about euthanasia.

No one is permitted to ask for this act of killing, either for himself or herself or for another person entrusted to his or her care....nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such action.

The other source of ambiguity is the closure of the year with no report from the ACT End of Life Choices Committee. This is more frustrating than having a report which maintains the status quo. It will now be months before we get any information with it now being the summer break. It seems that our only option is to be patient and wait.

Judith Barnes has let me know that she cannot continue in the role of secretary due to her other commitments. Apart from the administrative business of taking minutes Judith has provided great support to the committee by contacting all the relevant people who needed to approve our small gathering last year and she organized the printing of our T shirts. I thank Judith for her commitment to Dying with Dignity ACT.

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So over the summer break I ask you to think about whether you have some time to commit to this role. It does require a computer and a telephone although Judith managed without a telephone.

The Committee is taking this opportunity to invite one or more members to join the committee. I invite interested members to please ring or email me. My email is president@dwdact.org.au and DWD's phone is 51040920 (please leave a message on the answering machine).

Jeanne Arthur
President
DWDACT

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Please note the following statement that has been published on the WFRtDS website in support of Professor Sean Davison who is the President of the World Federation.

WFRtDS Statement regarding arrest of Sean Davison

25 September 2018

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies notes the recent arrest of its President Sean Davison on the charge of the murder of 43-year-old doctor Anrich Burger, who was left a quadriplegic after an accident in 2005. Anrich Burger's death occurred in 2013.

The facts of this matter will be determined by the courts in South Africa, nevertheless the World Federation of Right to Die Societies wishes it to be known that it commends those who support others who wish to have a peaceful death of their choosing. Its members are striving across the globe to make it possible for this to happen through regulation by the law.

The WFRtDS strongly condemns governments that continue to deny human beings ownership of their own bodies and control over their deaths by maintaining law that criminalizes those who assist others to die peacefully.

The World Federation believes that governments across the world are assuming control of what is not their right to control, our bodies, and denying human beings the right to a peaceful death free of suffering at a time of their choice.

The WFRtDS wishes to express its admiration for Professor Davison's courage and sincere engagement with those who are suffering at the end of life despite the ongoing persecution he has experienced by governments who maintain outdated, cruel law that forces its citizens to die of disease and to hang, gas or shoot themselves if they do not want that so-called 'choice'.

The WFRtDS calls on all governments 1) to repeal the law that criminalizes those who assist people who wish to die peacefully and 2) to provide proper regulation of death within their health systems based on universally accepted human rights law.

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