



Our Mission: To bring about such changes in Western Australian Statute Law and to medical ethics as will allow a person to receive medically assisted euthanasia under circumstances specified by him or her, when legally competent to do so.

Palliative Care and Voluntary Euthanasia

can they coexist?

These were my thoughts as I recently drove to the offices of Palliative Care W.A. in Shenton Park. I had arranged a meeting to discuss this issue with their Executive Officer, Amanda Bolliter, who was joined by Margaret Sealey, a retired nurse.

I was greeted warmly and opened the conversation by outlining WAVES' position on end-of-life choice, that I believed there was a close relationship between good palliative care and an end-of-life choice, and further, that both were part of the end-of-life process. I also pointed out that, when discussing this choice, it must be emphasised that the process is **voluntary** and has to be requested by the individual without any outside influence.

Amanda and Margaret expressed concerns, that when the Rights of the Terminally Ill legislation was in force between 1st of July 1996 and its demise following the passage of the Andrews Bill in Federal Parliament on 25th of March 1997, there was an exodus of palliative physicians. In fact, on checking later with the NT, I was advised that it wasn't so dramatic, as only one left, who was immediately replaced and a specific PC doctor was hired for the Central (Alice Springs) area.

PCWA are also concerned about the impact VE would have on indigenous and handicapped groups and whilst this may be a problem, I am sure given a suitable education campaign many of the fears could be allayed.

My visit concluded after an hour's discussion and although our ideas on the topic are still some way from harmonising, we have agreed to keep in touch and WAVES will become

involved where possible in the activities of Palliative Care WA.

Following my visit I contacted Marshall Perron and Judy Dent in the NT, to check on some of the items discussed with Amanda and Margaret. I was sent a paper prepared in Belgium, the second country to legalise voluntary euthanasia, which discussed the development of palliative care and the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia.

Among the findings of this report were:

"The European Association for Palliative Care has voiced concerns that legalising euthanasia would be the start of a slippery slope resulting in harm to vulnerable patients such as elderly and disabled people and that it would impede the development of palliative care by appearing as an alternative. (But) Data from the Netherlands and Belgium, where euthanasia is legal, do not provide any evidence of a slippery slope"

In summary, this paper by Jan Bernheim and colleagues, made a telling point when it stated: **"The development of palliative care and the process of legalisation of euthanasia can be mutually reinforcing"**.

This paper was published in The British Medical Journal 19 April 2008 and a copy has been sent to Palliative Care WA.

The journey continues!

Murray Hindle

AUSTRALIA 21 REPORT - Time for Legislation on Assisted Death

Following the report on the Round Table discussions held under the collaborative sponsorship of Australia21 and the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane in January 2013 about the question "*How should Australia regulate voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide?*", we have prepared the following letter which has been sent to all state politicians. It is self explanatory and we are awaiting responses which will be included in our next newsletter.

Dear MLC/MLA

10th August 2013

The West Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (WAVES) is currently contacting all Western Australian politicians both Upper and Lower House to gauge their reaction to the **Australia 21** report entitled: **'The right to choose an assisted death: Time for legislation?'**

I have been assured by Australia 21 that a copy of this report has been sent to all members of parliament at both state and federal levels. As this was done some time ago you will no doubt have received a copy and are, I hope, familiar with its content and recommendations.

The West Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society was formed some thirty years ago to press for the introduction of carefully safeguarded legislation to the Western Australian Parliament to give citizens in WA an end of life choice. Our extensive membership consists of persons from the professions and general public who are committed to seeing such legislation introduced and passed in Western Australia. Given the growing world-wide passage of end of life legislation we feel that it is only a matter of time before such legislation is passed in Australia.

What is particularly notable about the Australia 21 report is that although members of the study group came from a wide range of interests and backgrounds, some for and some against, the final conclusion in Part 2 was that legislative change was needed. Further, that there was no compelling reason to resist such change.

The recommendations made in the report were:

- a) State governments should develop legislation now to permit and regulate voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide in defined and limited circumstances.**
- b) The Federal Parliament should restore powers that were withdrawn from the Territories so these parliaments may do the same; and**
- c) Until the above happens each Member of Parliament should consider exercising his or her right to introduce a private member's bill on voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide**

WAVES is interested in your views on these recommendations and would request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the matter at a time convenient to you.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Murray Hindle
President

President's Report 2012-2013

This year has seen some lows and highs and as there were fewer lows than highs I will comment on them first. The main setback in our national quest for VE legislation came with the defeat in the NSW parliament of Green's member Cate Feahrman's VE bill. It seems that conservative elements within the political landscape are not yet ready to show the necessary spine to pass sensibly safeguarded VE legislation. This is an area where we need to concentrate our persuasive efforts.

I had a recent meeting with Palliative Care WA and you will find a copy of my report in this newsletter. Suffice it to say we still have a way to go to convince those involved in the provision of palliative care that our organisations are complementary rather than at odds. Still, I think the dialogue was of value and this area will be progressed in the future as our population continues to age.

Another area of concern is the numbers turning increasingly towards "self deliverance". This is probably not a bad thing for those with access to a peaceful death, but it ignores the plight of those who do not. It also reinforces our demands for legislative change. Who knows what horrors await us when the system collapses under the weight of unsustainable demand?

On the brighter and more positive side, there is growing support at high levels for change and this is evidenced in a number of ways:

Organisations such as **Australia 21** have made recommendations to state governments that they should develop legislation now to permit and regulate voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide in defined and limited circumstances. And further that Federal Parliament should restore the powers that were withdrawn from the territories so those parliaments can do the same. We have sent a letter to all state politicians referring them to the recommendations of the **Australia 21 Report**, of which I was assured by Australia 21, they all have a copy. We asked for their response and offered to meet with them for discussions. We wait with bated breath!

A **Council on the Ageing** forum held in NSW on the 27th of June had speakers on the topic "**Let's talk about dying**". And whilst some spoke against, the strongest arguments for change came from speakers such as Nicholas Cowdery QC and Prof Ken Hillman from the University of New South Wales. I will have a meeting with Chris Jeffrey of COTA on the day before our AGM so may have more to report then.

Support has also come prior to the last state election from Mark McGowan MLA Leader of the State Opposition, who stated that, if Labor became the government, he would introduce a bill to legalise VE. In the event, sadly for our cause at least, this did not eventuate and any legislation he may have proposed is now on the back burner.

Former leader of the Labor government in Queensland, Peter Beattie recently wrote a piece in support of VE in an eastern states paper. Let's hope that, if he wins a federal seat at the election, he will carry the same conviction with him. I don't think many of us believe in miracles but you never know! I should note that we have contributed \$5,000 to the election campaign of the Voluntary Euthanasia Party (VEP) to assist in getting the message out.

A meeting was held recently at the office of Robin Chapple MLC and suggestions by him are being considered. Robin is keen to present a fresh VE bill to parliament in a year and we will be assisting him where we can. He has asked that we examine the detail of his and Cate Feahrman's failed bills so that he may add to his research on his proposed bill. Linda Savage has kindly agreed to assist us. The most difficult task will be to convince the Premier of the need for his and his party's support of such a bill. Head against a brick wall springs to mind, however we mustn't falter! Robin also suggested that we publish our story in the press by way of a half or quarter page advertisement to attract comment and support. This will be considered by your committee.

In closing I refer you all to my item on Management Committee participation and look forward to your assistance in a future that will without doubt include voluntary euthanasia becoming legal in Western Australia.

Murray Hindle



MANAGEMENT MATTERS : Nominations

Management Committee concern:

'Full Steam Ahead' or 'Care and Maintenance'?

WAVES' Committee is elected on a two year basis. This year, after two years in the saddle - much longer for some - it is time again for a change of the Guard. The reality is, that if we do not get a full committee from President down at our next Annual General Meeting on 16th of October, we may have to operate WAVES on a *'Care and Maintenance'* basis. This will greatly diminish our effectiveness and status in the community.

The future efficient operation of the West Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society depends on having a full and active committee. It is appreciated that, because of the ageing structure of our society, some members may not be able to perform the duties required. But we do have many who ARE able and it is from this group that we expect support at committee level.

This is a call for those members to become active participants - if you are passionate about VE law reform, this is your chance to help make it happen by taking part in the decision-making process. We appeal to all, but in particular to the younger, energetic generation with fresh ideas to take charge and set the pace.

The tasks are not arduous and involve only eleven committee meetings per year. These are voluntary positions, but expenses incurred will be reimbursed.

Please remember: the more hands, the easier the load in our quest for sensibly safeguarded voluntary euthanasia legislation in Western Australia.

You will agree that WAVES can only be successful through active support and participation of its members, so PLEASE CONSIDER NOMINATING for any of the vacant positions:

Executive

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Committee

Membership Secretary

Editor Website & Newsletter

Minutes Secretary

Political Liaison Coordinator

Marketing & Promotions

Research Officer/Librarian

A Nomination Form is included in this newsletter. For more information, contact us at 9384 1421 or 9387 5126.


www.waves.org.au

Have you visited our website lately?

You will notice that we are still in the process of making it better. Eventually you will be able to access more factual information, newsletters, forms, references, etc., and connect to other sites using the many Links provided.

But we could use some help from a savvy member, who has experience in this field and is willing to assist us with it or perhaps take care of this important job. If you do, please contact us at: tel. 9384 1421 or 9246 1997, or email to:

webmaster@waves.org.au



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 16th October 2013

at 2 pm

at Citiplace Community Centre

on the walkway between the Art Gallery
and Myer Store opposite the escalators at
Perth Railway Station.

Guest speaker to be confirmed

Afternoon tea provided - **All welcome**

WFRtDS ~ A Central Point for Information about VE



Most VE societies in Australia, and overseas, constantly try to keep their members informed of all the latest developments. To do this accurately they each have to research, evaluate, publish and store information. Which means that they all do the same work. It is a laborious process and not every organisation has adequate resources to do it professionally. Duplication may result in misinformation as the original data get misinterpreted before being passed on. The obvious question is: Why not have a central point where all the information is collected and made available to everyone? Think of the money saved for other activities.

Do you know there is already such a central point?

The **World Federation of Right-to-Die Societies (WFRtDS)** was set up in 1980 to provide an international link for organisations promoting VE law reform. Membership now consists of 51 right-to-die societies from 28 countries and membership is growing fast. All member VE societies are invited to contribute details, reports and local news to this office. Potentially, this could become the answer to every member's dream: to be relieved of all the information seeking-and-gathering.

Unfortunately, this opportunity has not yet been fully appreciated; there is still much scope for further development. It is up to members to help make it work.

And not only organisations benefit; individuals are invited to browse the website and to subscribe to a free monthly update. Check out the latest news at: <http://www.worldrtd.net/>

CSC4VE ~ PC or PAD, but from whose point of view?

In April I listened to Lyle Shelton, Chief of Staff for the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL), debate with Richard Mills, DWDnsw's President, at The Wentworth Labor Party Forum.

A number of times when presenting his case against assisted dying, Mr Shelton referred to palliative sedation as being a suitable response by Palliative Care doctors when all other methods of controlling the symptoms fail.

I asked Mr Shelton afterwards whether he understood that palliative or terminal sedation means putting a person into a coma until they starve to death. He seemed unsure, and it appeared that he had not thought through the implications or personally witnessed such a death. I then pointed out that if the dying patient requested, *"Rather than starve me to death in a coma, with the trauma of having my family watch this slow death, please give me the next 10 days medication in a single dose"*, this would be illegal. He agreed.

I then asked why he believed it was morally acceptable that the slow death procedure should be legal, but not a quick death?

He spoke about the possible disastrous effects on our society if this was allowed to happen.

As a fellow Christian, I was not convinced.

I have since posed this question to Probus audiences at Wagga and Berowra:

"Imagine you were dying, in a state like the one I have just described, or screaming in agony because prostate cancer has spread to your bones.

You have two choices -

- 1. Palliative or terminal sedation, put into a coma and you die slowly taking 10 days. Or:*
- 2. Take the same medication, but in one dose, and you die within minutes."*

Not one person in the audience opted for the slow death, and as far as I could see every hand went straight up as preferring the assisted death in that situation.

Ian Wood,

Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia

For more interesting facts and fiction about the Christian point of view, read:

www.christiansforve.org.au/BibleFacts.html

My Brief Future

In a few weeks I shall begin my seventy-ninth year. At my age there's not a lot that's in any way exciting to look forward to, and in my contemplative moods I more usually mull over the mix of successful, failed and embarrassing episodes of my life with a somewhat philosophical mind's eye. It's a bit too late to be emotional about any of it; I can't travel back in time to change anything.

However, there is one thing I know the future holds for me and my contemplation of it is certainly emotional. It is my own demise. Inevitable, of course and likely to occur fairly soon, but it is not the fact of it that concerns me as I have no fear of death itself; it is its possible nature that's worrying.

Before becoming a schoolteacher, I worked for a number of years as a technician in a number of hospital path labs. During that time, I witnessed many, too many, patients die in agony. Today, such people with prolonged terminal conditions end up in palliative care facilities where, if their condition is sufficiently prolonged and pain alleviating drugs have ceased to be effective, they too undergo extremes of pointless and demonstrably unnecessary suffering.

Their suffering is unnecessary because if the authorities running the facilities had a vestige of compassion they would arrange for an easy pain-free death for these patients. Sadly, many of those authorities are governed by malevolent religious dogma that is anything but compassionate.

Personally, I earnestly wish that my own death is easy when it occurs as I also wish the same for others. If only our state and federal governments would ignore the religious lobby groups and enact legislation to ensure the legality of voluntary euthanasia without making it impossibly complicated to arrange, we could then all be less afraid and sleep more easily at night.

David Prichard, August 2013

GOOD BOY

1/8/2013

My name is **Tom Shanan** and I am producing a short film titled "*Good Boy*" which sheds a light on the hardships family members have to face while dealing with terminal illness and the choice of voluntary euthanasia.

The film is an independently produced short film, directed by **Oran Franco** at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne. Since this is a low budget short film we are relying on crowd funding to finance most of the production.

You can view our campaign on: Pozible.com, and: <http://www.pozible.com/project/27313>.

We would really appreciate it if you could help us by mentioning us on your website and in your newsletter and referring anyone in your network, who is passionate about the subject of voluntary euthanasia to our Pozible page where you can find all the information about our film. Oran and the rest of our production team are all extremely passionate about this subject and we would like to share this film with as many audiences as possible in order to spark discussion and debate about a reality which so many people have to face on a daily basis, and which we believe is extremely important to talk about. Kind Regards,

Tom Shanan; tomshanan@gmail.com

15/8/2013

Thanks for your contribution, first of all, and for including us in your newsletter.

We are starting to film on Tuesday and everything is going splendidly so far!

We are still seeking contributions as a big portion of the budget is self funded and we have yet to source the post production funding.

The *Pozible* deadline was 2 weeks ago but we are still accepting donations through our website: www.goodboyfilm.com, and we will reward our donors in the same fashion as we did through the *Pozible* campaign.

Please feel free to include that URL in the newsletter and my email for direct contact tom@goodboyfilm.com

Warm regards,

Tom Shanan; 0403965169

Notice Board

Membership Matters

As you know, some time ago we decided to limit the publication of our newsletter to only two per year to reduce printing and mailing costs. We proposed that our members would be informed about important matters via the website, which would be upgraded, and if needed, also directly via email. Unfortunately we cannot give you good news about the website - we are still working on it. But we are updating our database with your email -addresses, as you have sent them to us, and would urge those members that haven't done so yet, to consider this. It will assist us to get information and urgent messages directly to you. *Thank you.*

A SAD FAREWELL

Linda Ray 1936 - 2013

It is with great sadness that WAVES bids farewell to a good friend and loyal member of the Society, who passed away on Monday, 29th July 2013.

We will remember her for her commitment and dedication as a long-time member of the Management Committee, and later continuing to contribute tirelessly, in spite of her failing health. But most of all we will remember her for her caring nature and happy disposition.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to her husband, Ranjan, and to their family.

Vale Linda

West Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (Inc)

PO Box 7243, Cloisters Square, Perth 6850 – Phone 9384 1421; 9387 5126

Email: info@waves.org.au

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Membership year runs from 1st of July to 30th of June of the following year

Standard Rates

- ☐ Single \$ 20
- ☐ Double \$ 30
- ☐ Life Single \$ 200
- ☐ Life Double \$ 300
- Donation \$

Pensioner / Student Rates

- ☐ Single \$ 15
- ☐ Double \$ 25
- ☐ Life Single \$ 150
- ☐ Life Double \$ 250

(Rates effective from 1st July 2009)

Payable to WAVES at the above address or at any BankWest branch:

Account **WAVES** - BSB no: 306-061, account no: 419 8239.

Please complete this form and forward it to us, or bring it with you to the meeting.

☐ Mr&Mrs ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr

Please print clearly

Initials Surname

Address

Postcode Phone Year of birth:

Email

EXIT News

EXIT International welcomes WAVES' members to join their organisation and points out that only Exit members are allowed to attend the meetings.

Please phone Carol O'Neil on 0429 039 167 for further details.



W.A.V.E.S has no religious, professional or political affiliation. Its membership comprises a wide range of people - some from a variety of professions, including medical

and nursing; some from religious denominations and some politicians. Many have publicly expressed their support for the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia, both passive and active.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR CAUSE

You can help us make
Voluntary Euthanasia a legal choice.
Explain it to your friends and family.
Write, phone or visit your State MP.

Make your views known ?

WEST AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA SOCIETY Inc

ABN 16 953 675 488

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Executive Committee 2013

President:	Murray Hindle
Vice-President:	Ranjan Ray
Min. Secretary:	David Kelly
Hon Treasurer & Membership:	Gaye Harvey

Committee Members

Roger Andrews, Tina Christensen, Bill O'Brien, Geoff Walker, Stephen Walker

WAVES NEWS

If undelivered please return to:

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Cloisters Square

PERTH WA 6850

Print Post Approved

PP 607 603 / 1117

West Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (Inc)

NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION TO A VACANT POSITION

POSITION:

CANDIDATE:

Title(s): First Name: Surname:
(name in block letters)

Address:
.....

Phone: Year of birth:

PROPOSED BY
(name in block letters) (signature) (date)

SECONDED BY
(name in block letters) (signature) (date)

ACCEPTANCE

I accept nomination to the above position
(signature) (date)

I offer the following summary of my background relevant to the position (Optional)

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Additional comments: (Optional)

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