



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.

PREVARICATIONS, CONFABULATIONS, LIES

about Voluntary Euthanasia

“I like it when prominent politicians criticize euthanasia. But I wish they would be more careful with their words because when they get the details wrong, it can do more harm than good.”

These are the words of Attorney and author Wesley J. Smith, who has many feathers in his cap and no less poisoned arrows in his pen. He is a prolific writer of articles and opinion columns on issues such as bioethics, assisted suicide, human cloning, animal rights, legal ethics, and public affairs. In 2008 the Human Life Foundation named him a ‘Great Defender of Life’ for his work against assisted suicide and euthanasia.

The cause of his discontent were the well-publicised comments of GOP presidential candidate, Rick Santorum, during his interview by social conservative leader James Dobson early February. He ignorantly - and falsely - claimed that in the Netherlands voluntary euthanasia makes up ten percent of all deaths, that forced euthanasia accounts for five percent of all deaths, that people are euthanized involuntarily because they are old or sick and that elderly people don’t go into hospitals out of fear but rather go to other countries.

While the Dutch are known to be a pragmatic and tolerant race, who take things as they come and are not easily offended, this misrepresentation of the truth did cause quite a stir.

There was extensive reporting of facts and reactions by the Dutch media. Blogs were clogged with indignant remarks, such as:

25/2/2012 - Thomas Hevelen says:

You know, frankly, we in Holland do not estimate the United States very high, ever since Dubya [George Bush] was able to be a 2-term president. The issues with weapons, drugs, violence, racism, sex, poverty and mass fraud by banks and multinational companies make the United States and its citizens look far more stupid in our eyes than the other way around. So please, do have some bigot opinions about the Dutch, and do keep on making yourselves the laughing stock of the world.

Kind regards, Thomas.

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Notice of a GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday, 16th May 2012 at 2 pm
at Citiplace Community Centre**

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

Our guest speaker will be :

Diana Warnock

Afternoon tea provided - **All welcome**

25/2/12 - Zephyr replies:

Thomas, I hope you (and the rest of the world) will keep in mind that a great number of our citizens were dragged kicking and screaming into the George Bush era. We did NOT vote for him, did NOT vote for a stupid war, and do NOT vote for the idiotic sensibilities today's republicans embrace.

(Read more on : <http://www.buzzfeed.com/buzzfeedpolitics/dutch-outraged-over-santorums-euthanasia-clai>)

When finally the dust settled, the question was raised why the Dutch government had declined to directly contradict Santorum's false claims that 'forced euthanasia is legal and common in the Netherlands'. The Dutch Embassy in Washington's comment was that the government wanted to stay out of the American presidential election. But they added that "*It would be nice if American politicians stayed out of other countries' affairs and cultures and did not use misleading or false statistics solely to make political hay with their base back home.*" (The New York Times, 29/2/2012)

There is a saying, that cautions us to

'Be wary of eloquent people'.

And another one that reminds us that:

"Political language... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." (George Orwell)

Wesley Smith certainly is one of those, and certainly knows what to do with pure wind. His description of the reaction of the Dutch to the Santorum debacle bears witness:

"The Dutch like their euthanasia - but sure are sensitive when a prominent person describes the horrors that medicalised killing has unleashed. ... The Dutch media pounced, mocking Santorum for charging their doctors with "murdering" the elderly on "a grand scale." Alas, he asked for it because he got the details wrong. When decrying the culture of death, one must be as accurate as possible. Otherwise, the fish wiggles off the hook."

It is interesting to learn that in their 2001 essay, physician Matthew K. Wynia and attorney Arthur Derse accused Smith of selectively using evidence to create a false impression that bioethics is a monolithic field. They argued that Smith was "*prepared to bend the truth to make a point, turn a stomach, and potentially radicalize a reader.*"

Smith rebutted these criticisms, of course. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley_J._Smith) Mr. Santorum's campaign did not respond to a request from 'The Times' to explain his remarks, which is not surprising.

So, what can be learned from all this?

Another quote may have the answer:

"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic." (John F. Kennedy)

Maybe, instead of going out on the barracks, firing our guns, trying to expose lies and provide counter-arguments, we should consider other measures.

Or maybe "*The Truth Will Out*" anyway? (see article on page 4.)

Tina Christensen

A SAD FAREWELL TO ONE OF OUR OWN

Gertrud Helene Thompson 1924-2012

It is with great sadness that WAVES bids farewell to a good friend and loyal member of the Society, Trudi Thompson, who passed away on Monday, 19th March 2012.

She will be fondly remembered for her commitment and dedication as a long-time member of the Management Committee, and later, in spite of her failing health, for her tireless, passionate fight for justice and law reform.

Unfortunately, like many before her, she could not enjoy the experience of having reached her goal. But her vision will drive us on.

Vale Trudi !

President's Report

Dear fellow members,

This report covers the period from the AGM in 2011 until the General Meeting being held on May the 16th 2012. During this time we have among other things, upgraded our website which is regularly visited and reviewed, redrafted our Living Will (a copy of which can be found on the website), had representatives from TNS Insight speak to us on strategic planning and discussed strategies for the State Election expected to take place around March next year.

You have all no doubt heard of the sad case of *Herbert Erickson* who at the time of writing is charged with allegedly killing his ailing life partner *Betty Khun*. It seems that they had a pact that when things became unmanageable she would never be placed in a home. We have decided to assist Herbert and his family however we can and this may include financial support. Given the degree of community sympathy there is no doubt that our opposition would like to see this case fade away as soon as possible .It further serves to highlight the need in the community for *safeguarded end of life legislation* .

It is my intention to send a letter (not email) to all sitting members and ‘hopefuls’ well prior to the coming State Election to elicit from them their stance on the introduction of voluntary euthanasia legislation. Failing outright support for this letter, we may also canvas support for a *Referendum* on the subject. We will then publish as widely as possible the names of those for, those against and those who were either too frightened or too disinterested to respond.

As part of our strategy to put pressure on local politicians we may advertise our demands on a large billboard in a prominent place in the Perth area. This would involve expenditure in the order of \$40,000 for exposure for one month. Before this is done we will need funding which could be arranged by an appeal to members or a wider appeal to the public. Maybe there is a ‘ White Knight’ supporter out there !

You are all aware that our charter is limited to legislative change, something for which we have been fighting for the past thirty years. Do we need to amend our constitution to allow us more latitude, say along the lines adopted by *Exit International* ?

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on May 16th at the General Meeting.

Murray Hindle
President



I thought the following may be of interest to members, the details of which came from a website called 'Reason Australia'. This site includes an article on "Fighting fact-free journalism: a how to guide" and I trust they will allow me to quote some interesting observations on this topic.

"The boundary between fact and falsehood has been arguably eroded during the past few decades, aided by a media which has gradually discarded actual journalism that establishes and reports facts in favour of "churnalism".

"The persistence of misinformation arises because people build "mental models of the world based on the information they are given. When some of this information turns out to be wrong, a gap is left behind in this mental model. Having these gaps feels uncomfortable, so in the absence of a better explanation, people often opt for the initial, easily available explanation even if it is wrong."

"Alas, not only are simple retractions pretty ineffective, some debunking tactics can actually backfire and ironically amplify the misinformation effects"

Three backfire effects are discussed:

- The "**familiarity**" backfire arises when the refuted statement is repeated in the retraction eg "the moon is not made of green cheese". This makes any link familiar and familiar arguments are more likely to be accepted as true.
- The "**overkill**" backfire suggests that the more people are bombarded with counter arguments the less likely they are to accept that counter.
- The "**world view**" backfire refers to cases where people selectively seek out information that bolsters their view and ignore contrary facts ('confirmation bias'). This process strengthens a person's core belief. This backfire effect is strongest among those already fixed in their views.

How do we avoid these backfire effects?

A retraction will leave a gap so this must be filled with the correct information and an explanation as to why the misinformation was given in the first place.

* Do not repeat the myth. Start with "the moon is a rock". If the myth has to be repeated for clarity repeat it after the facts are presented.

* Keep it simple. If you can offer one strong reason why the misinformation is false, leave it at that.

Know your audience:

The trickiest backfire effect to deal with is arguably the worldview backfire effect. The fact is, all the evidence in the world will not change the view of the hardcore moon-cheese believer. But you stand a better chance of correcting misinformation among those not as firmly decided.

* Hence debunking should be directed towards the undecided majority rather than the unswayable (and usually most vocal) minority.

* Any debunking messages should also be worded and framed in a way that is least threatening to the recipient's worldview. Using non-inflammatory language, or presenting opportunities that a change-of-mind may bring with it, can go a long way in avoiding polarization.

I think the message from the foregoing is that we can forget changing the stance of the diehard "flat earthers" and concentrate on igniting the support of the silent majority. Remember that this silent majority is represented by the 85% of Western Australians who currently support an end of life choice.

I make no apology for "lifting" large parts of this well written article and refer readers to the full text which can be found on Reason Australia's website:

<http://www.reasonaustralia.org/news/articles/535-fighting-fact-free-journalism-a-how-to-guide>

Murray Hindle

Spreading our Message

As loyal members of WAVES you all know our 'Mission Statement'. Right?

Well ... maybe not exactly, but at least you know what we all want? We want to achieve voluntary euthanasia law reform, so we can die the way we want to die.

Simple - everyone wants it. OK...so nearly everyone - about 80% of us do.

But did you know - it seems inconceivable and is disappointing - there are still many people out there who have no clue about the concept of VE. They either do not want to know (too busy with living) or are genuinely ignorant.

And then there are those, who have some idea but are not really interested (we'll worry when our time comes). Going with the flow, but only if it's not too much effort. The 'majority' of the 80% wants VE law reform but is very silent about it. And our lawmakers gladly go along with that. It is this public 'lethargy' that gives them an excuse to linger.

So, what can we do about it?

It's easy: we all have to be pro-active. And your help is invaluable.

You need to keep talking and writing about your views on voluntary euthanasia, whenever there is an opportunity to do so.

This may be during a family visit, a walk with your friends, a casual get-together at the pub, a chat at a community event, a visit to the doctor, or any other occasion.

Remember the saying: "*What is said once, is noted; what is repeated, impresses*". And the more people impressed, the more will feel involved, and hopefully will keep the ball rolling until it hits a goal.

One of the best ways to impress others is by a 'letter to the Editor'. It is a good opportunity to react to a current news item, or voice your concern about dubious articles and letters. It is a means of getting your message across widely. This method is, of course, also used by those

disagreeing with us, and it is up to us to counter their assertions with equal resolve. In these cases we need to keep vigilant and not hesitant in responding. But ... with caution.

We are often asked if there are 'rules' to getting a letter published.

First, ask yourself what you want to achieve. Then, imagine yourself in the Editor's (but eventually the reader's) shoes. How can you best present your argument?

What would be your reaction, if an article or letter, contained overly emotional, or even abusive, language? Would you feel sympathetic, motivated, compliant? Don't think so.

In my view, courtesy and respect always win. What impresses the most is an intelligent, valid, persuasive argument.

So, yes, certain rules apply to good letter-writing - whether to the Editor or your MP

- refer to the article or explain in short, the reason for writing
- use a respectful tone (no matter how annoyed you are)
- make sure your message is clear and concise (not long-winded or overly-emotional)
- most importantly, make sure all information is correct (include references)
- ask reasonable questions to encourage interest or to invite a response
- end with a conciliatory note
- don't forget to include your personal details.

Please remember, finger-pointing and aggression may lift our spirits, but gets us nowhere!

So, dear members, be prepared to spread our message.

Keep active and together we shall prevail!

Tina Christensen

NEWS Update

Court Appearance

Herbert Erickson who allegedly assisted in the death of his partner of fifty years Julie Kuhn will appear in the Perth Magistrate's Court at 9am on the 2nd of May.

Mr. Erickson was the carer for his partner for some time and they had apparently made a pact to assist each other when the time came. His subsequent suicide attempt was unsuccessful and has resulted in the position in which he now finds himself.

We in the voluntary euthanasia movement feel deeply for Herbert and Julie and deplore the situation where, in desperation, people are forced to take the law into their hands.

What a terrible way to reinforce the obvious need for readily accessible good palliative care and a peaceful way out at the time of our choosing.

A Message from the Minister for Health

Responding to a letter from our Secretary querying the arrangements for Advance Health Directives (AHD) in patient records in Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) and others, *Dr Kim Hames MLA* sent us the following reply:

"The Department of Health (DOH) is currently developing the scope for scanning paper records at Fiona Stanley Hospital and other State facilities, in line with the DOH's goal of delivering a State-wide Electronic Medical Record solution.

The records scanning project will potentially be piloted at several WA health facilities before FSH is operational and the DOH will work closely with those facilities once the scope of the project is completed.

It is envisaged that the patient's scanned records will be presented electronically in a similar view to the current paper system, with binder separation for different forms, reports and information.

Once the records have been scanned, critical forms such as AHD will have an electronic flag associated with it. This shows an alert to the member of staff who opens the record and ensures that the patient's requirements are read and acknowledged."

This is an important step forward and all members are urged to make sure that they have completed the Government's AHD and provided copies to doctor and family.

Newspaper polling - how reliable is it?

The Mercury published an article on 17/02/2012 which reported -

- about Dr Nitschke ("*... legislation enabling Australians to help a seriously ill patient end their suffering without risking a 12-year jail term, is inevitable*"),

- about Mr McKim and Ms Giddings ("*It is high time that Tasmania's laws caught up with public feeling on this issue,*"), and

- about Australian Christian Lobby state director Mark Brown ("*the cheapening of human life by the promotion of suicide options, could lead to dangerous scenarios where healthy people could end their lives for comparatively trivial reasons such as a relationship break up.*")

It ended the article with a poll:

"Do you support moves to legalise euthanasia?"
Votes (on 17/2/12): **Yes: 34, No: 66.**

I subsequently sent a Letter to the Editor:

"What method do you employ to check that the same people cannot put in multiple votes (as I just did!). It seems to me that your poll on voluntary euthanasia is easily rigged by dishonest people. So the outcome will always be in question."

My email address supplied. No reply received, so please, draw your own conclusions.

(see: www.themercury.com.au/article/2012/02/17/301801_tasmania-news.html)

www.waves.org.au

*Have you visited our new website lately?
Do you like it? If you have any questions or constructive criticism, please contact
Bill O'Brien - wkob@bigpond.net.au
Tel 08 93257575 or Mob 0466997575*

Notice Board

Membership Subscriptions

We remind members that our current membership year runs from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. You may want to check if you are overdue with your subscription payment - **the date of expiry will be shown on the address label** of your copy of WAVES NEWS. Your co-operation in settling overdue accounts is much appreciated.

When paying directly into WAVES' Bank account, please, make sure to notify us? Otherwise we have no way of knowing who has paid and for what – subscription or donation. Send us a copy of your bank receipt, or simply email or post us the details: your full name, address and details of payment: subscription/ donation, period. Cheques, of course, are most welcome, but do not send cash. Also let us know if you require a receipt, as we normally do not issue one.

Pre Election Advertising Campaign

With the next State Election looming on the horizon (March 2013?), WAVES' committee is weighing up all the options for getting our message across to the public and our MPs. The possibility of erecting a large billboard in a prominent location, with a brief punchy message urging the electorate to contact their candidates for support of VE legislation, is one of the options that will be considered. The total cost of a comprehensive, across-media campaign (4 weeks) could add up to \$40,000. Most will be financed by WAVES, but an appeal for extra funds may have to be made to membership and the wider supportive community. It is still early days and nothing has been set in concrete at this time, so "Watch this space!"

West Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society (Inc)

PO Box 7243, Cloisters Square, Perth 6850 – Phone 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 !

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Vice-President: [vacant]

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