



## PHILIP NITSCHKE: BRINGING SUICIDE TO 'THE DEPRESSED, THE ELDERLY BEREAVED AND THE TROUBLED TEEN'

**Philip Nitschke's workshop for EXIT in London today will advise on the sourcing, supply and use of barbiturates, helium and other means to commit suicide. His presence in the UK puts the lives of vulnerable people who are elderly, depressed, disabled or mentally ill at grave risk.**

In 2001, Nitschke said that his so-called 'peaceful pill' should be *'available in the supermarket so that those old enough to understand death could obtain death peacefully at the time of their choosing'*. Asked who would qualify for access he replied that *'all people qualify, not just those with the training, knowledge or resources to find out how to "give away" their life and someone needs to provide this knowledge training or resource necessary to anyone who wants it, including the depressed, the elderly bereaved, (and) the troubled teen'*.<sup>1</sup>

A 2010 report<sup>2</sup> demonstrated that coroners were aware of 51 Australians who had died from an overdose of Nembutal, a lethal barbiturate that Nitschke has promoted since the late 1990's as 'a peaceful way to die'. Of the 38 cases fully investigated by coroners, only 11 people were known to have suffered chronic physical pain or a terminal illness before their deaths. Of the 51, 14 were **Australians in their 20's and 30's**.

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<sup>1</sup> Kathryn Jean Lopez & Philip Nitschke, 'Euthanasia Sets Sail', *National Review* (June 5, 2001; accessed June 5 2013) <http://old.nationalreview.com/interrogatory/interrogatory060501.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Julia Medew, 'Call to charge Nitschke for 'aiding' suicide', *The Age* (February 18 2010; accessed June 5 2013) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/call-to-charge-nitschke-for-aiding-suicide-20100217-odx9.html>

Journalist Michael Cook put it to Nitschke in 2011 that *'nearly two-thirds of the Australians who died after quaffing Nembutal... were under 60, and quite a few were in their 20s and 30s... [suggesting that] that mental illness or depression, not unbearable pain, was the reason for the suicide.'* **Nitschke responded that *'There will be some casualties... but this has to be balanced with the growing pool of older people who feel immense well-being from having access to this information, [about suicide drugs].'***<sup>3</sup>

In the past, his workshops have focused on the use of drugs and gas to commit suicide, with around half the time being used to explain how Nembutal, a veterinary sedative, can be used to end life. Nitschke has **explained to attendees the best way to administer drugs and gas** in order to bring about death, and has advertised test kits for Nembutal.

The Suicide Act, as amended in 2009, states that *'an act capable of encouraging or assisting the suicide or an attempted suicide of another person'* is illegal, *'whether or not a suicide, or an attempt at suicide, occurs'*; the emphasis is on whether the accused *'intended to encourage or assist suicide or an attempt at suicide'*.

We believe that what Nitschke did at previous workshops falls within the scope of these offenses, because the information shared was capable of encouraging or assisting an attendee to commit suicide *and* the workshop was intended to encourage or assist people to commit suicide by offering them advice about the 'best way' of doing it.

Nitschke's activities present a real and present risk to vulnerable members of the British public. Why did the Home Secretary let this man into the UK?

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Cook, 'Dr Death makes suicide a laughing matter', *The Punch* (March 3 2011; accessed June 12 2013) <http://www.thepunch.com.au/articles/dr-death-makes-suicide-a-laughing-matter/>