

act branch news

No harm to others: my life, my dying
Dying with Dignity news from the ACT Branch
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**Committee:**

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Next General Meeting

The first General Meeting for 2010 will be held on

Thursday, **15 April**, 2 pm, at
The Weston Club,
Liardet Street,
Weston.

NB the venue for 2010. We are returning to The Weston Club, which we used in 2008. It is just off Hindmarsh Drive.

Speaker:

Emma Awizen

Coordinator, 'Respecting Patients' Choices', based at The Canberra Hospital

She will speak on 'Respecting Patients' Choices', the program whereby patients' Advance Directives and other wishes are recorded when they enter hospital. She will discuss how this record is maintained, how patients' choices get implemented, and what impediments there are. Her talk will be followed by questions and discussion.

There will be coffee and tea after the meeting, to continue informal discussion.

Future General Meetings, 2010

(all at The Weston Club)

July 15 & November 18 (AGM)

PUT THE DATES IN YOUR DIARIES!

Activities this month (March) - We have an active program this autumn. Do note these dates and come along and be part of the activities!

Tuesday, March 16, 7 pm - Senator Bob Brown
Address(see opposite).

Thursday, March 25

As part of Seniors' Week, we will have a table at **Seniors' Expo** at the Old Bus Depot at Kingston, 10am to 3 pm.

Tell your friends: information leaflets available, Dying with Dignity membership forms. Come along and talk with Committee members at our table.

On the National Front

As a result of a meeting in Adelaide last year of State and Territory representatives of DWD/VE societies, there has been considerable activity and interstate correspondence, sharing information and preparing initiatives to give us a national voice and visible presence.

A national organisation (perhaps 'Australian Coalition of Right to Die Societies') will still leave much autonomy with State and territory organisations. It is at State levels that legislative change must take place. In WA, SA and Tasmania new bills have been presented to State Parliaments to facilitate doctor-assisted suicides.

For the ACT and NT, the introduction of such legislation is still forbidden by the Andrews Act of 1997. We must continue to press the federal government to allow discussion of Senator Brown's bill, as a first step to making legislation possible in the ACT to improve condition for Voluntary Euthanasia. Ply your local MPs with the statistics available (e.g. DWDNSW web site and Kris Klugman's talk to us in March 2009) for widespread public support for VE, to try to counter Prime Minister Rudd's recent statement that he 'doesn't see a huge push for a vote on physician assisted dying' ('Sunrise' TV program 12 Feb.).

Media coverage

The topic of a 'good death' is now attracting quite frequent attention in newsprint, radio and TV, in Australia and internationally. An excellent article by Dr Clare Skinner on 'The ethical minefield of bringing them back' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, Feb. 16, p. 9) stimulated vigorous (and favourable) discussion on ABC radio 666 morning program (Alex Sloan) on Feb. 17, 'The ethical dilemma of Emergency Departments'. Cf. the ABC TV program, *Four Corners*, Feb. 8.



Tuesday, March 16, 7 pm

Senator Bob Brown will address a public meeting on 'DYING WITH DIGNITY', with reference to his bill ('Restoring Territory Rights (Voluntary Euthanasia Legislation) Bill 2008') seeking rescission of the Andrews Act, on other legislation put forward by Greens MPs in Victoria and Western Australia, and on the Senate Inquiry into Suicide.

Venue: The ACT Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Civic

Senator Brown's speech will be followed by half an hour of questions and discussion.

Seating is limited so come early!

Annual General Meeting 2009

At our AGM on 19 November the Committee for 2009-2010 was elected, with membership as listed at top of this newsletter. The Committee has since met twice, in December and February, to keep abreast of DWD/VE issues and legislation, to coordinate submissions, and to plan our 2010 program.

NOTE AGAIN DETAILS OF THE 2010 PROGRAM IN ITEMS ABOVE!

Any member who would like to suggest items for the ACT Newsletter is invited to contact the Editor or other members of the Committee (contact details above).