



MEDIA RELEASE

Cairns Library cancels Euthanasia Meeting at last Minute

A last minute decision by the Cairns City Library to cancel the booking of Exit International for a Voluntary Euthanasia public meeting and workshop planned for Monday 1 June was described today by Dr Philip Nitschke as “pathetic”

Dr Nitschke said his Melbourne office had been contacted only around midday today to cancel the booking made in March for Monday’s meeting. The only reasons provided were that “too many people may wish to attend” and that “security would need to be involved as they were at the last gathering Exit ran”

Dr Nitschke said the reasons provided by Library manager Kerry Still for the change were farcical and implausible.

“Clearly we would restrict the number attending to the number the booked venue could hold. There has been no need for security in Brisbane, Rockhampton or Mackay where over 400 people have attended such gatherings in the last week. At the last Cairns meeting at the Library in May 2005, 50 people attended not the 150 as claimed by the Library manager. The only reason security was called was because of a power failure and the fact that the Council had failed to provide an after hours contact number.

The decision by the Library parallels that taken by the South West Mackay Neighbourhood Centre in Mackay who made a last minute cancellation due to the philosophical views of the booking agent to the VE issue. In Mackay, the University of Central Queensland stepped in offering the Cook Lecture Theatre as a substitute venue, citing their belief in free speech and a need for open discussion. Over 180 people attended the Mackay meeting on Thursday 28 as a result.

Dr Nitschke said that the Cairns City Library’s decision would cause a great deal of disruption and mean that Exit would now incur significant expense in altering plans and in legal advice regarding compensation.

“We have widely advertised this venue. Indeed the booking was made back in March. If the Library did not wish to lease the venue to us, why was the booking initially accepted?”

“If an alternative can not be found at such late notice I will address the gathering of people in the street outside the City Library. It is wrong for one individual whose religious or moral beliefs may object to VE to prevent the issue being discussed with those who have a different point of view.”

Meeting inquiries: Lindy Boyd 03 9850 8192 **Media inquiries:** Dr Philip Nitschke 0407 189 339

Email: contact@exitinternational.net **Web:** <http://www.exitinternational.net> & <http://www.peacefulpill.com>

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