

Nudge, nudge, ban, ban ... government prescribes censorship

If you want to read *The Peaceful Pill Handbook*, which provides information on assisted death and voluntary euthanasia, buy a copy quickly.

The man who has been unable to get David Hicks freed from Guantanamo Bay in five years, Attorney-General Philip Ruddock, has moved with the speed of light to get the book banned, says Bill Rowlings of Civil Liberties Australia.

"In December 2006, the Classification Review Board approved an Australian-printed edition for sale in book stores in Australia wrapped in plastic, and only for people over 18. But in September 2006, Customs had ruled an overseas-printed edition was a prohibited import," he said.

"Because the different decisions are embarrassing the government, Mr Ruddock last week (on 12 Jan 07) asked the Classification Review Board, Australia's censor, 'for a review of the decision'. Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.

"So the Attorney-General, who is happy to accept US Bush Administration umpiring decisions in the case of David Hicks, won't accept the decision of the independent umpire, the Australian Classification Review Board, which he himself appointed.

"He has formally asked them to 'review' their decision...or, in other words, indicated with crystal clarity that he wants the book banned.

"This executive government banning of a book sets a new low for censorship in Australia," Mr Rowlings said.

PS: The National Library of Australia may have a copy: it lists *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* by Philip Nitschke and Fiona Stewart, published 2007 by Exit International of Darwin, on its "pre-release" register. Will the Thought Police be mounting a raid on the National Library?

Details of the book: <http://www.peacefulpillhandbook.com/>

Further info: Bill Rowlings, CEO of CLA, 02 6288 6137 or 0408 697 971

FYI:

Ruddock media release: SUICIDE HANDBOOK referred for review 12 Jan 07

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock has today asked the Classification Review Board to review the classification of *The Peaceful Pill Handbook*, a publication which provides information on assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia.

In September 2006, the Australian Customs Service seized copies of the book as a prohibited import under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956. In December 2006 the Classification Board classified it as Category 1 - Restricted, meaning it had been approved for distribution.

The Attorney-General said this highlighted an apparent anomaly in the application of two pieces of Commonwealth legislation.

"The means is that the publication is legally available within Australia but it cannot be legally imported into Australia," Mr Ruddock said.

Under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*, the Attorney-General can apply to the Classification Review Board for a review of a Classification Board decision.

"This is an important issue and a classification review is the appropriate mechanism for testing the classification of this material," Mr Ruddock said.

Media Contact: Michael Pelly 0419 278 715

Email: distributed Fri, 12 Jan 2007 14:31:25

ENDS Ruddock media release