

Freedom to choose panel draws big audience

More than 170 people listened avidly to and asked questions of a top-quality panel at a euthanasia forum at the ANU College of Law in Canberra on 29 November 2006.

Entitled *End of Life Options for Older People*, the event was chaired by former WA Premier and current Member of the House of Representatives, Dr Carmen Lawrence.

The panel made presentations for the first hour, and there was lively discussion for the second hour. Panellists were:

- Dr. Tom Faunce (doctor and lawyer, College of Law and Medical School, ANU): *The dying process in an era of for-profit health care*;
- Donna Daniell, (CEO Palliative Care Aust.): *National Policies*;
- Dr Andrew Skeels (Calvary Health Care ACT): *Palliative care: a medical view*;
- Senator Amanda Vanstone (Liberal Senator, SA): audio-tape in support of voluntary euthanasia
- Senator Kerry Nettle (Greens): *Legislative possibilities*;
- Bettina Arndt (Sydney author and social commentator): her personal, family story: *Why the system is failing*;
- Jeanine Lloyd (Canberra author and solicitor): Legal and practical issues in ageing and death.

George Buckfield (see photo, at rear) introduced the forum. The photograph of the forum is by Bill Rowlings, CEO of Civil Liberties Australia (CLA). Voluntary euthanasia is part of the policy platform of CLA, and VES and CLA are exploring ways of further cooperation.

The ACT Branch of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society thanked VESNSW for its support of the forum.

ACT is returning the favour by helping VESNSW and EXIT organise and prepare for a National Day of Shame, in Canberra on Monday 26 March. 'Shame Day' marks the 10th anniversary of the overturning of the world's first voluntary euthanasia law - the Northern Territory's Rights of the Terminally Ill Act.

– Beryl Rawson, VES board and CLA member