

FACTSHEET 25: World Federation of Right to Die Societies

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRTD) was founded in 1980. There are now 53 member organisations based in 23 different countries. WFRTD provides an international network for organisations advocating for assisted dying law reform. One of its key programs is the biennial Conference, which has been held in Melbourne three times – 1982, 1996 and 2010.

History

After the formation of the Japan Euthanasia Society (now the Japan Society for Dying with Dignity) in 1976, Dr Tenrei Ota convened an international meeting of right to die societies, attended by representatives from Japan, Australia, the Netherlands and United Kingdom attended. A second conference was held in San Francisco in 1978, and at the third conference held at Oxford in 1980, the World Federation of Right to Die Societies was officially founded.

WFRTD role

- disseminate current information and educational materials about voluntary euthanasia, physician assisted dying, and other right-to-die matters
- promote co-operation and liaison among member societies
- facilitate international conferences on dying and death
- provide assistance in establishing similar societies in other countries
- respond to requests by interested groups, scholars and individuals for information about right to die matters.

WFRTD has regular meetings to exchange news and to elect Directors.

Mary Gallnor, SAVES President from 1993-2001, was WFRTD President from 1998-2000.

The WFRTD does not have a policy making role. With each member developing their own policy in relation to assisted dying law reform. Instead, the WFRTD developed a Manifesto which sets out a position on assisted dying.

Manifesto

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies (an international non-governmental organization) is aware of the increasing concern to the individual over their right to die with dignity. Believing in the rights and freedom of all persons, we affirm this right to die with dignity, meaning in peace and without suffering.

All competent adults - regardless of their nationalities, professions, religious beliefs, and ethical and political views - who are suffering unbearably from incurable illnesses, should have the possibility of various choices at the end of their life. Death is unavoidable. We strongly believe that the manner and time of dying should be left to the decision of the individual, assuming such demands do not result in harm to society other than the sadness associated with death.

The voluntarily expressed will of individuals, once they are fully informed of their diagnosis, prognosis and available means of relief, should be respected by all concerned as an expression of intrinsic human rights.

A feature of biennial conferences has been the declarations by Medical Professionals in support of the goals of the WFRTD.

Member organisations worldwide:

- Africa:** South Africa, Zimbabwe
Asia: Japan
Europe: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy
Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Middle East: Israel
North America: Canada, Mexico, United States
South America: Colombia
Oceania: **Australia:** South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, ACT, New South Wales, Victoria
Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia
SAVE-YA
New Zealand

For further information on the World Federation of Right to Die Societies see www.worldrtd.net