Based on my particular experience as a practising palliative care and geriatric consultant my submissions are:

1. That there needs to be a wide promotion of the use of aged care directives. This helps both patients and families to face up to the difficulties that can surround end of life situations.

2. In the presence of an ACD, the ideal management of individual situations should be left to a doctor and one other trained clinician. This avoids the lack of empathy that can occur when legal and religious criteria become part of the equation.

3. Suitable legislation should be provided to protect the clinical status of the professionals involved and through this to avoid the situation in which Dr Rodney Syme as been forced to place himself.