Dear IASP member,

In just a few days, two major events in the life of IASP will take place. Firstly, the World Suicide Prevention Day 2005 (see www.iasp.info) will be held on September 10th. The International launch will be made both in Durban, South Africa and in Cairo, Egypt. Most importantly, however, is that a huge number of national and local activities for the Day have been planned all over the world. Under the motto "Prevention of suicide is everybody’s business" we promote this day as a way of expanding the societal basis for suicide prevention, realizing that suicide cannot be prevented through interventions from the health service and other professional agencies alone. More involvement is needed from every sector of society. We wish you all great success with the WSPD 2005 and would be very interested to have your feedback and experiences reported at www.iasp.info.

The other major event taking place shortly will be the XXIII IASP World Congress in Durban, South Africa. An innovative and rich scientific programme has been prepared for all delegates who have registered for the conference and we know that our local hosts, professor Lourens Schlebusch and Executive Director Sue Thonell, have worked hard to make this not only a scientific event but a true African adventure to all of us. The Executive Committee and the Organising Committee welcome you all to Durban on September 13th.

This will be my last news bulletin for you in the capacity of president of IASP. It has been a true privilege to serve you and the organization over these past years. We have an extremely important cause to fight for, and we have extremely resourceful and competent members.

This is why I have great expectations for a continued growth of IASP in years to come, both in terms of the strength of the association and the contribution we should make to society. Fortunately, I know that IASP will be in the best of hands when the next president and board take over next month. They will have my wholehearted support.

Lars Mehlem
President
Australia outlaws using internet incite suicide

People who use the Internet to incite others to commit suicide or teach them how to kill themselves face fines of up to A$550,000 ($430,000) under tough new laws passed in Australia.

Using the Internet to counsel or incite others to commit suicide or to promote and provide instruction on ways to do it has been outlawed but the new laws were not designed to stifle debate about euthanasia, Justice Minister Chris Ellison said. “These offences are designed to protect the young and the vulnerable, those at greatest risk of suicide, from people who use the Internet with destructive intent to counsel or incite others to kill themselves,” Ellison said in a statement. Individuals convicted of such offences face a fine of up to A$110,000, while corporations face a fine of up to A$550,000.

Use of the Internet to organize suicide pacts emerged as a grim problem for Japan last year, with dozens of Japanese killing themselves in Internet-linked group suicides. Helping someone to commit suicide is illegal in Australia but there has been a long-simmering debate about euthanasia.

Dr Philip Nitschke shot to fame in 1997 when he helped four people die in the Northern Territory, where the practice was briefly legal before the national government stepped in to overturn local laws.

CANBERRA (Reuters) -