



It is with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Dr Rodney Syme AM who, more than any other, made possible the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying in this country. Andrew Denton has written [a moving tribute to Rodney](#), which is published in full on the Go Gentle Australia website:

*"The mighty oak has fallen. There seems a vast, empty space in the forest where he once stood. That familiar, comforting shadow no longer cast. While his passing fills us with grief and we will miss him in our bones as mentor, friend, and guide, we carry with us in our veins Rodney's life's work; Rodney's method; Rodney's unshakeable commitment to principle."*

Over several decades, Rodney risked criminal prosecution after publicly revealing he had supplied terminally ill Australians in unbearable pain with medication to end their lives. It was this direct challenge of what he saw as unjust laws that became the catalyst that inspired others to fight for change. Andrew Denton writes:

*"Always, he was there. Always, his opinion clear and deeply thought-through. There is no doubt in my mind that, in Rodney, we had a man more experienced in end-of-life and its many forms than any other person alive. As recently as a fortnight before his death, Rodney was still actively trying to organise a national body to allow VAD knowledge to be discussed and shared. He was also seeking to introduce better methods for practitioner administration, based on the Swiss model, which would lessen the load for doctors asked to end another's life. He was indefatigable. Unbreakable. Or so it seemed."*

It is hardly adequate to say that we have been privileged to know, and to work alongside, someone as compassionate and fearless as Rodney Syme. We are determined to continue Rodney's work, and fulfil his dream of a more compassionate end-of-life choice for all Australians. In the words of Andrew Denton:

*"He was a great man. He goes with every honour and with our deepest gratitude and love."*

We shall miss him.

Kiki Paul – CEO Go Gentle Australia