

**From:** [REDACTED]  
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To Whom it may concern

When my Aunt [REDACTED] was diagnosed with stage 4 stomach cancer in early 2014 I wrote to Shane Rattenbury about the need for access to medicinal cannabis for patients like my Aunt. Between the chemotherapy induced nausea and the general lack of appetite from the cancer she was unable to consume more than a few hundred calories a day. This sapped her strength very quickly making it impossible to continue treatment or consider surgery in an attempt to extend her life. She passed away not long after her diagnosis and it was heartbreaking to watch a strong woman who had already overcome so much adversity reduced to a shadow. From the start my Aunt was realistic about her diagnosis. She knew she was going to die and just wanted to be comfortable and surrounded by family in her final months. The Chemotherapy and the cancer robbed her of that opportunity. She died in pain having lost so much weight and strength that the painkillers would have killed her had she taken sufficient quantities to alleviate the pain. Even in smaller doses the pain killers made her drowsy and unable to interact with family and friends.

I don't believe that medical cannabis is a miracle cure or a replacement for existing treatment options but I believe there is enough evidence to support the complementary use of cannabis in cancer patients and others with a genuine need. Any drug that could temporarily alleviate the symptoms of nausea and increase the appetite would have, in my opinion given my Aunt more quality time to spend with her family. There is also some evidence to suggest that cannabis can alleviate pain with lesser side effects than the opiates they currently prescribe.

Compassion should be at the heart of any medical debate and I believe compassionate access to medical cannabis through licensed and accredited dispensaries is long overdue in the ACT. I support providing the opportunity for patients to produce their own cannabis but I would also propose a scheme that would allow patients to purchase cannabis with a valid prescription. My Aunt passed away within 4 months of her initial diagnosis. Under the current proposal she would not have had the time or the ability to produce cannabis for her own use. This is the case with many patients diagnosed with cancer. They can begin treatment very soon after diagnosis. Having to procure the necessary equipment to grow cannabis and having to wait months for the plants to mature is in my opinion an unnecessary delay and would be detrimental to the patient.

Thank you for considering my submission. I would appreciate it if you would not publish my Aunt's name or my name although I am happy to speak with the committee about this issue.

Regards

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