



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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## Submission Cover Sheet

### End of Life Choices in the ACT

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# Select Committee on End of Life Choices in the ACT

## Inquiry into End of Life Choices in the ACT

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To Whom it may concern,

This is still an emotional subject as I have only recently had to experience the loss of my grandfather, Philip [REDACTED] 'Pops' as I always knew him by. He was quick of wit and kind in his words and it didn't matter where you were from or what you were doing there you had a friend or the very least someone to talk to when Phil was around.

Phil was and always will be a great role model as he cared for all of his family deeply and was involved in numerous community services around Canberra being a Freemason. Not only was he involved in the community outside of work but also for the majority of time he was in Canberra having overseen many of the renovation & expansion projects at Canberra Hospital including the Cancer treatment buildings.

Unfortunately the treatment he received there could not help him overcome the 3 types of cancer which had taken his mind and body. He fought bravely multiple times with Chronic Lymphatic Leukaemia. However it was the Metastatic Squamous Carcinoma and Melanoma which he couldn't beat.

The point of writing this submission begins with his treatment just before Christmas and New Years. After his radiation treatment for the melanomas in his brain he was rushed to hospital where he spent 3 nights in the emergency department before being moved to a more permanent ward. It was here that we found out the treatment needed to be more extensive as in the time it took to prepare the radiation treatment for the known cancers, others had grown and weren't in the original scans. By Christmas he had all but lost his speech and struggled to put together a whole sentence, he was also unable to articulate his needs and we didn't realise the pain he was in for a few days until the physiotherapy staff returned from their holidays. Feeding him through this time consisted of forcing him to eat a few mouthfuls of soup every meal time or failing that some ice cream or a nutrient shake. His condition deteriorated over the week between Christmas and New Years. It was just after new years that the doctors informed us that there were no treatments that could help him and that they couldn't offer him anything other than morphine to ease his passing. Phil being himself was fighting to the very end and survived until the 8th of January where he was lucky enough to have been moved to Clare Holland House for one night.

When I say we are a close family I am not exaggerating. Pop's had his wife Marie by his side almost 24 hours a day from the beginning. His daughters and son were by his side everyday and even us grandchildren were with him for 3 weeks straight. To see their grief each day as his body deteriorated without anyone being able to do anything to help is something I hope no one has to go through.

Why in this day in age is it acceptable for families who love each other to be tormented with the slow, painful passing of their cherished ones wasting away to mere shadows of their former selves when we have the means and awareness to ease a tragic time is beyond my comprehension.

By no means am I a particularly religious person, although I was educated in a Catholic school and do have family who are ministers, but I do have a belief that is very common and that is to 'do unto others as you would have others do unto you.'

The greatest gift god gave mankind was the right to choose. Let our decisions be ours and respect us and our loved ones.