



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

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Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

Submission Number: 218

Date Authorised for Publication: 29/3/18

SUBMISSION

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

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Disclosure: My daughter is Tara Cheyne.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a public submission. I note the Committee's full terms of reference but have chosen to address number 2 mainly.

Terms of Reference No. 2: ACT Community views on the desirability of voluntary assisted dying being legislated in the ACT

Babies don't get to choose how they come into this world. For some it is a natural birth while for others birth is assisted with the use of medical intervention such as forceps or caesarean. As mothers there's not a lot of choice because we rely on the advice of the medical profession to bring our precious child into the world.

By the time we become adults, however, we have formulated strong views on many topics and we make **choices** on all aspects of our lives: housing, health and fitness regimes, our faith, education and politics to name a few. Why then, when diagnosed with a terminal illness, can't we choose the manner in which we wish to end our lives?

As an adult I want to choose how I leave this world, and have the right to decide when and where to end my life. I don't want to be in hospital or palliative care. I want to be able to make this decision with the assistance of my doctor before the illness and/or medication renders my mind useless.

My decision has been reinforced through personal experiences watching loved ones endure painful end of life where no amount of medication eliminated the pain. The sense of helplessness watching a loved one die an agonising death is heartbreaking AND totally unnecessary. My loved ones didn't have a choice, but I hope to have a choice living in the ACT.

My wish is to die with dignity. Across the world VAD options are already in place – Europe, Canada, the United States and Taiwan have already enacted assisted dying legislation. Australians deserve this right, too, and I applaud the Victorian Government's recent decision to introduce VAD from 2019.

I ask the ACT Legislative Assembly to lobby the Federal Government in order to legislate for the ACT to determine its own policy. Please ensure this important legislation isn't clouded or delayed with scaremongering tactics. There are plenty of guidelines from around the world to ensure genuine fears are allayed and I note there are 68 safe guards in the Victorian legislation.

It's my right to choose.

Debra Cheyne



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