



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

Ms Bec Cody MLA (Chair), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Tara Cheyne MLA,
Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA.

Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - EOLC](#)
Subject: End of life choices in the ACT - Voluntary Assisted Dying
Date: Friday, 23 March 2018 5:20:49 PM

Hello,

I would like to provide very brief thoughts and personal observations on the benefits of voluntary assisted dying in the ACT based on my experiences and beliefs. While I don't address all of the terms of reference, I have a couple of brief comments on some of them after my general comments on the need for voluntary assisted legislation in the ACT.

My personal beliefs on the need for voluntary assisted dying were shaped significantly both of my grandmothers enduring long periods of dementia and failing health with no quality of life and being forced to suffer for periods of 3 and 6 years before they finally died. My maternal grandmother suffered the longer and more difficult life after hospitalisation in Bendigo when I was a teenager. Her dementia was severe with no knowledge of who was visiting, where she was or what was going on.

This affected my mother significantly (and the rest of my immediate family) and she experienced extreme anguish after visiting her mother. She would be so upset that she spent most of the hour and a half return trip from Bendigo to home in Shepparton wailing and crying about her mother's condition and that nothing could be done to improve her quality of life. We all felt that my grandmother had no quality of life and couldn't work out why life was being prolonged at great expense and use of hospital and financial resources when she got absolutely nothing out of staying alive - so why bother.

I hope the ACT can legislate for voluntary assisted dying so that if I am ever in a similar position as my grandmothers with no knowledge of who is visiting me, no ability to communicate properly, not being aware of where I am and why I'm there and not having any meaningful quality of life, my life can be ended peacefully and without harm so that I am not kept alive for the sake of it.

I do not wish to be a drain on important health and financial resources if I have no quality of life and hope ACT legislation for assisted dying can be passed to enable this to happen should a medical professional make an assessment that meets my care plan to avoid prolonging life needlessly if I suffer from bad dementia, am seriously injured or suffer from a debilitating illness - in all cases with no meaningful quality of life. I also don't want my daughters and their families to suffer seeing me in such a condition and causing them pain and suffering.

I would like to be able to specify what conditions need to apply before my end of life choices are implemented on my terms, rather than being prevented because of the current Commonwealth legislation that prevents Territories having assisted dying legislation.

The Victorian legislation may provide a suitable starting point for ACT legislation, but ACT legislation and safeguards should also be shaped by submissions received by the committee.

Commonwealth legislation should be repealed in the near future. The religious right of the coalition shouldn't stop people in the Territories from exercising the same rights as Victorians, and possibly additional states should they pass assisted dying legislation.

Cheers and thanks for your consideration,

John Gillies



Lyneham ACT 2602