Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

Submission Number: 76
Date Authorised for Publication: 29/3/18
To: Mark Taylor,

My name is [Name redacted] and I reside with my husband [Name redacted] at [Address redacted], Toongabbie NSW. [Name redacted] and I are 29 years of age and we have been together for 9 years. Up until July 2017, [Name redacted] and I were living a very happy and healthy life together. In 2012, we both completed our university studies at the [University name redacted] and [Name redacted] commenced employment in the [Field redacted] field and [Name redacted] commenced employment as a [Role redacted] with [Company name redacted]. In 2013 we brought our first home together and later married in 2014. While our lives were busy we were extremely happy and we were looking forward to our bright future together.

In July 2017, [Name redacted] commenced complaining of severe headaches. His GP thankfully referred him to complete an MRI. It was during this MRI scan that a brain tumor 6 cm in width and 8 cm in length was located in the frontal lobe of [Name redacted]'s brain. [Name redacted] was immediately admitted into Westmead Hospital and underwent surgery several days later. [Name redacted] was diagnosed with an incurable and terminal form of Brain Cancer, Stage 3 Anaplastic Astrocytoma. He was told by the neurosurgeon that he may not live to see his 30th Birthday. [Name redacted] is due to celebrate his 30th Birthday on the [Date redacted] of [Year redacted] this year.

The news we received on this day was undoubtedly devastating. The many years [Name redacted] and I thought we had together were gone. Instead these many years have been replaced with a very bleak future of [Name redacted] and I sharing at most a couple more years together while battling brain cancer.

As [Name redacted]'s wife and partner in life, I feel an enormous responsibility towards [Name redacted]. This responsibility relates to a number of different things. I want [Name redacted] to receive the upmost best medical treatment and care. [Name redacted] is currently being treated at Westmead Hospital and has completed 6 weeks of daily radiation therapy and is currently undergoing chemotherapy. I do believe [Name redacted] is receiving the best medical treatment and I have faith in my abilities to care for [Name redacted]. I want the last years of [Name redacted]'s life to be fulfilling. [Name redacted] is surrounded by a loving family and number of friends. Together I know, we will make these years fulfilling. Ultimately, when the time comes I want [Name redacted] to have a peaceful and pain free death. At the present time, this is unfortunately the one thing I can not guarantee my husband.

Over the past 6 months I have read everything there is to know about Brain Cancer. I have joined online support groups which allow me to communicate with other carers looking after loved ones diagnosed and dying from Brain Cancer. Like all cancer, Brain Cancer is an absolute insidious disease. It causes a lose of cognitive and physical functioning. It destroys...
quality of life and it can ultimately result in a painful, horrible death. Yes, there is palliative care. However I continually read stories on the brain cancer support groups to which I am part of where despite the assistance of palliative care, patients dying from Brain Cancer continue to experience deaths that they did not wish for. I do not want to have a bad death. I do not want to die in pain. The only way I can guarantee my husband a pain free death is if the law is reformed in NSW to allow volunteer assisted dying.

Mr Taylor, I am asking you today to consider supporting the voluntary assisted dying law reform in NSW. If this law were to be passed, and I would be provided with the comfort of knowing that when the time comes, will have choices. When you are diagnosed with terminal cancer, you really are not given many choices. Please consider supporting the voluntary assisted dying law reform in NSW, and assist my husband in gaining the choice to die peacefully.

I appreciate the time you have taken in reading this.

I am happy and willing to answer any questions or queries you may have.

Kind Regards

Toongabbie NSW