



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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**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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## SUBMISSION FOR ASSISTED DYING

MY FATHER WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CLL (LEUKEMIA) MANY YEARS AGO, THEN DEVELOPED MELANOMA CANCER IN 2017. HE HAD 11 LYMPH NODES REMOVED FROM HIS RIGHT GROIN WHICH WERE ALL CANCEROUS. THIS WAS TREATED BY IMMUNOTHERAPY WHICH DID NOT SEEM TO HELP AS HE SOON DEVELOPED A 3<sup>RD</sup> TYPE OF CANCER. WITH THE REMOVAL OF HIS LYMPH NODES HE SOON DEVELOPED LYMPHODEMA IN HIS LEFT LEG. THE WOUND WHERE THE NODES WERE REMOVED NEVER REALLY HEALED.

HE WAS FINDING MOVING AROUND TOO PAINFUL AND WAS UNABLE TO TOILET HIMSELF IN THE NORMAL WAY. HIS LEG FELT LIKE A BLOCK OF WOOD AND HE WAS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE.

HE NOTICED MORE AND MORE LUMPS DEVELOPING AS THE YEAR WENT BY. HE WAS FALLING AND WHEN HE WAS RUSHED TO EMERGENCY THEY DISCOVERED THAT THE MELANOMA HAD MOVED TO HIS BRAIN. THE PROGNOSIS WAS 3 – 6 WEEKS WITHOUT RADIATION AND 3 – 6 MONTHS WITH RADIATION. MY FATHER WAS DETERMINED TO GET THE MOST OUT OF HIS LIFE AND SPEND AS MUCH TIME WITH HIS FAMILY.

MY FATHER HAD HIS FIRST ROUND OF RADIATION IN DECEMBER 2017 AND THAT NIGHT HE WAS RUSHED TO EMERGENCY AGAIN AS HIS LEG HAD DEVELOPED CELLULITIS. HE SPENT 4 DAYS IN ICU BEFORE BEING MOVED TO WARD 4B.

HE WAS ABLE TO COMPLETE HIS LAST 4 ROUNDS OF RADIATION BUT HAD A MINI SEIZURE ON CHRISTMAS EVE WHERE HE LOST MOST OF HIS SPEECH. WE COULD SEE HIM DETERIORATING DAY BY DAY. WE WERE LITERALLY FORCE FEEDING HIM TO TRY AND GET HIS STRENGTH BACK UP. HE WAS JUST LYING IN HIS BED DAY AFTER DAY, WEEK AFTER WEEK. I COULD SEE THE DESPERATION IN HIS EYES.

THE DAY HE PULLED ME CLOSE TO HIM AND MANAGED TO SAY – "I HAVE HAD ENOUGH – I WANT TO DIE" NEARLY KILLED ME. HE WAS SUCH A FIGHTER BUT THE PAIN AND HIS STATE WERE FINALLY GETTING TO HIM.

ONCE THE DOCTORS TOLD US THERE WAS NO MORE HOPE FOR HIM, THEY STOPPED FEEDING HIM. MY MUM AND I STAYED WITH HIM 24/7 AND WATCHING THE LIFE IN HIM SLOWLY FADING AWAY WAS VERY TRAUMATIC FOR OUR ENTIRE FAMILY.

IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT I WISHED ASSISTED DYING WAS AN OPTION AS OUR ENTIRE FAMILY WAS IN AGREEMENT THAT WE DID NOT WANT TO JUST SIT THERE DAY AFTER DAY, WEEK AFTER WEEK WATCHING HIM IN AGONY DYING A SLOW AND PAINFUL DEATH.

MY FATHER WISHED IT TO END AND SO DID WE, BUT WE HAD NO OPTIONS! I DO NOT EVER WANT TO SEE ANOTHER MEMBER OF MY FAMILY GO THROUGH WHAT MY FATHER WENT THROUGH.

IT IS INHUMANE!! WE EUTHANISE OUR PETS WHEN THEY ARE TOO SICK OR INJURED BUT WE LEAVE OUR FATHER TO SUFFER AND WASTE AWAY TO NOTHING MORE THAN A SKELETON, HEARING HIS DEATH RATTLE NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE CONSIDER ASSISTED DYING SO THAT NO MORE PEOPLE SUFFER AN AGONISING DEATH!

I AM MORE THAN HAPPY TO BE CONTACTED IN THIS REGARD.

MANY THANKS

MICHELLE HEINE

