



**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]
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I heard mention on the ABC this morning of this Committee and submit my opinion based on two family cases both well cared for in nursing home situations.

My Mother:

A supporter of euthanasia having suffered with poor health all her life with little quality of life. After a fall that fractured her pelvis she was recommended to move from self-care into the hostel of the village she resided in. Being very independent she refused saying she would know when she was ready to move. In fact after nearly two years struggling she finally said she was ready in mid 2015 and moved into the hostel. Her health rapidly declined despite marvellous care from staff, Mum took responsibility for herself and starved herself to death over a couple of months slipping away after 4 days of palliative care just weeks before her 93rd birthday.

The sad thing is that she so wanted to go, even opening her eyes asking if she was still here! She had been in pain for some time with her back and blood tests showed a possible tumour but she was unaware of this, however she had been too fragile for a while and would not have coped with invasive investigations. While it would have been hard for me I would have supported her in euthanasia had it been legally available.

My sister:

After about 17 years living with Multiple Sclerosis my sister had to move into a nursing home as her partner had badly injured his back assisting her after a fall in the toilet, he still suffers from the injury. My sister was 58 when she moved in. After a short time there she confined herself to bed, refusing to join other residents. Her condition declined to the point where she required two staff to carryout any assistance for her. After our mother died she desperately wanted to go as well, she had absolutely no quality of life, her vision was going, she only had slight movement in one arm and her voice was also going. Even though she had difficulty sitting in a wheelchair, I took her to her neurologist at Canberra Hospital who confirmed there was nothing that could be done for her vision then seven months later she died. She too starved herself, a painful thing for me but she was determined.

When a person is medically acknowledged to have no help available and is desperate for release then the option should be available to them.

Within twelve months I lost my mother and my sister in circumstances that really made me realise there is a case for euthanasia. It was very hard for me and is still upsetting to have seen them both in such desperate situations.

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