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Submission 180

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Lilian Topic,
The Secretary, Legal & Social Issues Committee,
Parliament House,
Spring Street,
Melbourne. 3002

Hon Edward O'Donohue. MLC. Chair.

Being witness to my wife's death in early 2011 was both traumatic and disdressing, the experience, by far the most confronting of my life, now deeply etched upon my memory, permeates my thoughts everyday.

The love of my life was diagnosed with asbestosis, a collapsed lung and the rapacious cancer impacting upon her oesophagus and heart muscle.

Following the diagnosis, it was determined the condition to be terminal and inoperable. From diagnosis to death was just three weeks. Fortunately, very fortunately, I was able to be at my wife's bedside for 18-19 hours each and everyday, attending to her needs, during which time we were able to communicate with the exception of the last days. Oxyden and sedation was being given, her breathing laboured and very loud.

My wife wanted and I most certainly do, a more powerful palliation, I do not want a needlessly protracted death and have to endure the suffering and misery inflicted upon my wife.

While I have lodged an Advance Care Plan with Barwon Health through the Respecting Patient Choices initiative, the document has no legal standing. Such is a real concern for myself and increasingly so as I near Journey's end. A change in the law would be very welcome.

In great anticipation, yours faithfully,

David Shuttle