

26<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Submission 423

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To;

Lilian topic, Secretary, Legal & Social Committee Parliament House,  
Spring Street, Melbourne VIC 3002.

To whom it may concern,

Whenever the topic of assisted suicide or as I prefer "Voluntary euthanasia" is raised, I struggle with my emotions as many memories flood my mind.

In the mid sixties my Mother (aged in her twenties) was diagnosed with a rare degenerative neurological condition.

Mum had four children of which I was the second eldest & as fate would have it the only one not to contract Mum's condition.

Mum spent her final twelve years in a nursing home & passed aged 37.

As I do, my older brother remembered visiting Mum in those homes & I believe because of those memories & the fact he did not want his two young children to see him lose the battle as well as his dignity, He ended his own life aged 32.

My younger Brother served his country in the defence force for four years & shortly after leaving the forces he was affected with the condition aged 25. At age 27 I had to admit him to a nursing home for full time care, from where I would take him to doctor & dentist's appointments.

Because of his condition the muscle spasms made it impossible for the dentist to attend to my brother's teeth without me standing behind the chair & hold my brothers head. (so much for my brothers dignity). My brother spent ten years in the home & I remember many incidents of what I believe were moments of lost dignity despite the love & care given by the nursing team. He passed in my arms aged 37 & only weighed 33kgs. I remember standing beside my brother's bed holding a pillow intending to end his suffering though because of not knowing what my brother's thoughts & wishes were, due to the fact he was unable to talk for the final three years of his life because of the effects of the condition I was unable to apply my intent.

My younger sister had a longer time to suffer & spent her final seven years in the same nursing home as her older brother & like him she too passed in my arms aged 43.

As you can see I have had much experience in watching loved ones deal with life changing events & the subsequent effects that their loved ones were forced to deal with because of those events.

It is because of my experiences, I strongly believe that like organ transplant or donating blood, the decision of voluntary euthanasia is

not a choice that sits well with every one of your constituents though I also strongly believe it is a choice we all deserve to have.

I understand that there are many pitfalls that could result in some individuals using any possible new legislation to their advantage & it is because of this we need to make sure we dot the I's & cross all the T's to ensure that the only person who can make the final decision to end their own battle with an undefeatable condition is the one who is fighting that condition & "NO ONE ELSE".

My offer to you is if I can assist you in any way to convince the Victorian Politicians to create & pass legislation to allow their constituents to choose whether or not, they wish to die with the dignity we all deserve, I am always available whether that be in person, phone, video or any other communication that suits you so please do not hesitate to contact my mobile.

I appreciate your time.

Many Thanks  
Mark Gilmour