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Subject: Fw: Assisted Dying Submission
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Submission on Voluntary Assisted Dying

Dear Committee/NTG

Introduction:

I write this submission as someone who has witnessed firsthand the suffering of a loved one (my stepdad for 47yrs that was an extremely proud and respected man). Who's life came to an end in September of 2024.

I also carry the same journey after my mother was diagnosed with throat cancer, only one month after Bruce died.

The experience of Bruce dying has left me convinced that our current approach to end-of-life care is inhumane and in desperate need of reform.

Current Experience:

When a person we love reaches the end of their life and is in extensive pain, the current options available are cruel in the NT. The process which i witnessed last September, involved heavy sedation (but he could hear us) they withdrew all food and water. This was traumatic. At the time of this sedation, we sat with him, watched and waited day after day. In Bruce's case it took 7 days.

Watching someone slowly decline in this way is unbearable. For loved ones to sit at the bedside in anguish, never knowing which day or hour will be the last.

When death finally comes, and in Bruce's case, happened when we had stepped away for short time. This left an extreme sense of guilt and failure, as though we were not there when we were most needed.

This process is not only physically painful for the dying person but emotionally devastating for those left behind. It adds trauma on top of grief. It feels inhuman.

A Humane Alternative:

We treat our animals with more compassion. When an animal is sick, old, or suffering in the NT, we allow them to be put to sleep peacefully, surrounded by love. The process is quick and dignified: families say goodbye, and the animal passes away without prolonged agony.

Why can't we offer the same dignity and compassion to our loved ones? Human beings deserve no less kindness in their final moments than the pets we love.

Need for Reform:

I believe our laws in the NT must change to allow a person at the end of life—with sound mind and clear intention—to choose voluntary assisted dying.

This must be a compassionate, dignified, and timely process that spares further pain and unnecessary suffering. By changing the process spares the family/or loved ones the prolonged agony of watching them deteriorate. Which in the NT is sedation and a bag connected to them, their body fluids drain out each day into the bag, their body slowly shutting down until their last breath. This is cruel.

Conclusion:

The current system is cruel, protracted, and inhumane. We owe it to our loved ones—and to ourselves—to permit a choice that allows for a peaceful and dignified passing.

I strongly urge the Parliament to support a Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation in the NT that recognises compassion, dignity, and family wellbeing at the end of life. Like options in QLD and other States of Australia.

2 years ago my husband's father was in the same situation, he travelled to be with him, once everyone that wanted to be there had their time with him and said their goodbyes, his father then said enough was enough and he decided when that would be. He was put to sleep and died within a few hours. With his loved ones around him.

Time to change what was stripped away from us here in the NT.

Signed:

Sascha Gibson

