

To Whom It May Concern.

My name is Stefan Testi, and I am a 28 year old male in Perth, Western Australia. I am writing this submission in relation to the hope to increasing funding for the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation.

Brain Cancer was something that I was completely unaware of, only 5 years ago. Never did I expect Brain cancer to be the single greatest illness cause of death in Australian's under the age of 40.

My entire perception of Brain cancer, and it's incredibly devastating path and poor prognosis was only appreciate when one of my very longest, and very closest friends from school, was diagnosed in April 2013. Ben was only 5 days older than me, we had very similar, extremely athletic attributes, we were both very intelligent people, both with wide circles of friends, and incredible potential to achieve many great things. There was not very much that separated us in many ways, just one key factor – a large tumour growing in his brain. And this tumour took away the hopes of dreams, and endless potential of this incredible man, and friend to so many people. Ben was engaged to his partner of 10 years together.

What Ben was told in April 2013, was that not many people, with his stage of cancer, would make it past 5 years. Ben showed incredible mental resilience, and tried more than I could ever believe, to fight the odds. He wanted to prove all of the doctors wrong, he wanted to spend every day he could with his fiancé, and make the most of any days he could grasp. Despite making every positive lifestyle choice possible to fight this cancer; given all of the current research and advice from all health professionals, and all that helped alternative treatments; unfortunately, ultimately, terminally – he became the statistic that the doctor's predicted. A person with so much fight, courage, bravery, sense of humour and willingness to live and make the most of everything possible – became a statistic.

To all of us – his close friends and family – he will never be a statistic – he will always and forever hold a major significance and memory for us all. But, what he endured, and what so many VERY young Australians – 5 year olds, 7 year olds, 10 year olds – 1200+ per year; is a path and prognosis that MUST be changed. And this change can only become possible with the adequate funding.

Neurosurgeon, Dr Charlie Teo has cited that a spike in treatment success rates in many other cancers; for example breast cancer, leukaemia, prostate cancer etc – have all coincided with increased funding and awareness. Meanwhile, the funding, and therefore treatment success outcomes in Brain Cancer has lagged behind. And this has to change.

I personally never saw firsthand the excruciating pain that Ben's fiancé described to me. She is still having nightmares, flashbacks and many mental health issues from the ongoing recounting of the torture this cancer created for the one person she loved most.

I know that a funding outcome cannot, and should not be influenced by one story – however this is just a solitary account from my perspective, however, this is occurring to hundreds of young kids and of course their families, each year.

I strongly believe that funding in this area must be addressed. The survival rates of Brain cancer are currently very poor, and can only be improved with the appropriate recognition – funding and awareness.

There are some extraordinary facts about brain cancer, in relation to other cancers on the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation website - <http://www.curebraincancer.org.au/page/8/facts-stats>