

In support of submission by [REDACTED]

Last year my father was receiving radiation treatment therapy for skin cancer.

This resulted in an extended period away from home for both himself and our mother who stayed with him to support him during the period of treatment

Within 24 hours of his return home to [REDACTED] he was admitted to the local hospital and was shortly thereafter diagnosed with an aggressive stomach cancer and given only very short time to live.

Having now spent the last ~~two~~ weeks in hospital and with what was going to be his last Christmas approaching he requested to spend his remaining time at home with Mum to care for him with support from both family and friends.

He sought the familiar surroundings of his family home rather than the sometime impersonal environment of the hospital and although unable to fully enjoy those surroundings saw his home a much better location to be to enjoy the company of his family and friends who came to visit.

Prior to coming home my father was referred to the Palliative Care Nurse for specialised support and to a private nursing service through DVA for personal care.

My father achieved his wish and passed away at home with family by his side.

My father died late in the evening and we attempted to notify the attending G.P. to complete the death certificate but he was unfortunately unavailable. We at the same time contacted the ambulance service and the chosen funeral director and because of the absence of a death certificate the police had then to be called before my father's body could be taken and in effect situation very like a crime scene was established with the police remaining at our parent's home for over six hours until our fathers body as able to be finally transported to the funeral home.

Whilst understanding that there are legal requirements for someone to sign a death certificate before the Funeral Director can take the body, there must be a better way for this to occur rather than have to wait an extended period.

Surely in situation such as ours either the Ambulance service or an accredited community nurse could be authorised to determine the extinction of life so that our loved one could be taken without the need for a police presence.

With the passing of someone close to you, although expected, it is an extremely difficult and emotional time. The seemingly unnecessary involvement of police only sought to exacerbate these emotions to the extent that our mother has indicated that whilst

previously electing to follow the same path as our father and choose to die in the comfortable and familiar surroundings of her home, if now afforded the choice and given the circumstances that evolved with our fathers death, she would elect to be transported to hospital, rather than subject her family to similar emotional upset.

We would like to suggest the situation of police involvement, when a person has a life-limiting disease and chooses to die at home and is a patient of a Palliative Care Service be reviewed so that dignity for the person and family may be observed.

