

## VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL 2021

*Legislative Assembly Second Reading Debate – copied from Hansard 19 November 2021*

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (09:33):** I will finish my speech that I started last week on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021. I note that people do listen to the proceedings in Parliament because I received an email from Mr Mark Gilmour after my contribution last week to outline his experiences. He said:

Yesterday Afternoon I arrived home a little late from work though I tuned into the live stream of the statements being made on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill.

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Please read my story & you will understand why I'm a very staunch supporter of voluntary assisted dying.

Below one of the few photos I possess of my Mother with her four children. Mum had a very rare dominant form of Ataxia which claimed her life aged 37 after twelve years of suffering in a nursing home. As dealt by fate I was the only one of Mum's four children not to contract this insidious condition. I was the second eldest & am now 60.

I watched my Mother fade away and then have my older Brother take his life aged 32 as he Never wanted to see the inside of a Nursing home as his youngest brother was already in care. My younger Brother Passed age 37 after 10 years in an aged care home. When he passed he weighed 33kg.

My Sister passed age 43 after 7 years in the same aged care home as Her Older Brother.  
My younger Siblings both had 1 child each & both these children contracted the condition & both passed in their early twenties.  
I also have very explicit & disturbing stories of dealing with my sibling's battles as they faced the many challenges life dealt them. As you can understand I've witnessed a fair share of suffering & why I hold the beliefs I do.

After reading that email I contacted Mr Gilmour and told him that during my speech today I would read it onto the record. We have a responsibility to represent our constituents, unlike members in the upper House. There are 50,000 voters who are clearly telling me, in a majority, that they want the bill to pass. It is time to get it done and move into line with other States around Australia. It is time for us to do the right thing. Members hold deep-held beliefs on this issue, as they do on all issues of conscience. But as I said last week, as elected members we are responsible for representing our constituents.

Whilst members may hold personal views, we are elected in this place to represent the majority view of our electorates. I uphold my electorate's views. Overwhelmingly, over 90 per cent are in favour of the assisted dying bill. Other polls conducted in my electorate overwhelmingly show that the community supports passing the bill. There will be amendments to the bill and members will seek to insert safeguards, but at the end of the day we are elected to represent the people who live in our local communities. That is why I support the bill. Stories like Mr Gilmour's reinforce the importance of getting this bill passed.