



**Better care for our Carers**  
**Submission to a Parliamentary Committee Inquiry**

**Summary  
Extract**

Life Goes On® is the only telephone counseling and online service in Australia dedicated to support carers and their loved ones facing a serious and/terminal illness.

**Introduction**

The diagnosis of a life-threatening and terminal illness affects the whole family. It is estimated that close to 100,000 deaths each year are 'expected' (or predicted). That is, deaths for which the primary cause was a chronic condition - and close to 1/2 million Australians are affected by the 'expected' death of a close friend or loved one each year. (Palliative Care Australia)

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that caring for a loved one under such fear-filled and stressful circumstances often poses more challenges than those faced by the person they are caring for.

The reasons are obvious: patients are attended to by their doctors, nurses, and other allied health professionals. It is assumed that carers can take care of themselves. But this is not the case.

Mindful that carers of all ages need as much care as the people they care for, in 2000 we established the only national 24hours 7 days telephone counseling service in Australia dedicated to helping the whole family - patients, their families, their carers - find their way in the face of a serious and terminal illness.

According to our data, people call us is because they feel:

- Isolated
- Alienated
- Helpless
- Are fearful of the loss of their loved one
- Anxious about their current financial burden and when their loved one dies
- Emotionally drained
- Depressed

*Current statistics reveal that most callers through the telephone book - and that most of these calls are from country areas.*

**Our Aim**

Our aim is to help people achieve the best outcome possible by helping them overcome and manage the practical, psychological, existential, and spiritual chaos that arises from a serious and terminal illness.

We do this by listening to them, and based on our own experiences and our training, providing them with strategies and choices to help them find their way.

**Our achievements**

Life Goes On is a successful organisation endorsed by leading medical specialists and peak bodies that has been operating since January 8<sup>th</sup> 2002.

Through our 24 hours x 7 days telephone counselling service we have helped over 20,000 families and patients all over Australia. Use of our service is currently growing at 33% a quarter.

We reach patients and family carers in cities, towns and rural and remote areas throughout Australia.

Our philosophy, born of personal experience and backed by research, together with the rigorous training of our volunteers, ensures the high quality of our services.

Life Goes On has been accredited by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners as an endorsed education provider and runs highly acclaimed educational workshops for doctors and healthcare professionals.

Our innovative and interactive website will soon offer secure and confidential counselling, online workshops and discussion forums.

Life Goes On is a Public Benevolent Institution with Tax Deductible Status and GST registered. It has a Board of Directors and an Advisory Council that include respected doctors, scientists and business people.

**Our Founder****Joel Nathan, OAM**

Since 1987 Joel Nathan has been a psychotherapist working privately with patients and families facing life-threatening illnesses. In addition, he was a facilitator in the Palliative Care Unit, La Trobe University. In 2000 he was invited to be a signatory to the Charter of Paris at the World Summit Against Cancer.

He is an active Member of the International Psycho-Oncology Society, Associate Member Clinical Oncology Society of Australia, and past Patient Advisor to the National Institute of Clinical Studies' Program into Pain Management.

Joel Nathan is a 25-year survivor of leukaemia with two recurrences, lung cancer, renal failure and five-way coronary by-pass surgery. He is the author of *Time of My Life* (Penguin Books, 1992), and *What to do when they say, "It's Cancer" - A Survivor's Guide* (Allen & Unwin, 1998) on sale in nine countries and four languages and endorsed by leading medical specialists in Australia and the USA.

**Statement of Intent**

Life Goes On® is committed to supporting carers and their loved ones facing a serious and/terminal illness. Financial support will enable us to reach more people in need.

**Contact**

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