

Friday, 22 May 2026

Take Advantage

To Whom has a heart big enough to take action after listening to a true story;

22. That's how many Birthdays I've celebrated, in our small hometown city of Gladstone. There's been 22 years of Google maps technology, shot blast glass for protection and Auslink for transport. At 22, I don't remember who the last 3 prime ministers were, or why they discontinued dunkaroos, or how the average wage when I was born was only \$24 an hour. I don't know what budget cuts are, who has a say or how the government decides who needs them more. But, at 22 I know what Cabozantinib, Topotecan, Vincristine, Cyclophosphamide, Doxorubicin, Ifosfamide, Etoposide and carboplatin is, what it does and the side effects it causes. At 22 I know what an autologous stem cell transplant is, how high your temperature can reach before needing hospital and that you can survive on having a red blood cell count of 20 and platelet count of 4. At 22, I know what it's like to be pushed, shoved, poked, stabbed, cut and drowned and I have thought that I may be taking my last breath on earth at least 22 times.

At 22, I know that there's no guarantee of tomorrow, so why am I being punished within a healthcare system set up to 'take care of the ill and weak'? Is it because at 22 I am brave, fearless, resilient, motivated, driven and strong? Or is it because at 22, you think I'm weak enough to put in the corner, to make my voice too small to hear and that I'm too afraid to fight for what's right? Because I'm happy to keep dancing around your trickery, I'm destined to keep pushing and fighting and shoving my way through, to have our voices heard, to have our stories told and for us to be memorable.

For too many years, youth oncology patients in major metropolitan hospitals have been taken advantage of, specifically at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. We are the ONLY Sarcoma centre for Queensland. The Princess Alexandra hospital, Metro South Health treat all oncology patients that the Royal Brisbane Women's hospital cannot and then some. This hospital is relied upon for access by patients from regional Queensland as far and wide as the border, as high as the Cairns region and even a few patients who make the journey from northern New South Wales.

Yet, we have been 'awarded' a lovely 3 seater couch and tv, shoved conveniently into a 3m by 5m room, if I am being generous. Take advantage again. We have the 'privilege' of meeting new people on every single ward within the hospital that has a spare bed to hold us. Take advantage again. We have been 'nurtured' enough that we no longer need clean, functioning private showers and toilets. Take advantage again. We are 'valued' enough that when we voice our concerns, no change happens. Take advantage again. And you sit here in your fancy, tax payed office, in your expensive suits or dresses, getting paid more hourly than my disability support would pay me for a year and you just guess that we are the lucky ones?

Well I'm here to break the facade that's built up around youth oncology, because it's a ruthless, terrifying, painful journey where we get nothing but trauma, side effects and shells of a soul to show for decades to come, if we have the privilege of survival. Change the term take advantage to have a positive meaning for young Australians fighting for their lives. Make it sound like hope.

Allow budget for the removal and remediation of space at the Princess Alexandra Hospital so that Sony Foundation can use their \$20 million dollar pledge to build a You Can centre for youth oncology patients. You can take advantage. Use the publicity for allowing room in your budget to boost what Queenslanders think about your political party. You can take advantage. Show interest, sympathy and compassion to youth who are the future of Queensland to gain more voters. You can take advantage. All it takes is a small allotment in a huge liberal budget, to make a change, not just for now, but forever.

As a very politically strong representative for the Queensland Liberal Party for Health, you must be advantageous in the way in which you hold yourself for the state. To be the representative we all need. Set an example and use the collaboration of other likeminded, strong, powerful and respectable teams to deliver promises to the Queensland hospital community at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

We can do so much with this million dollar allotment in budget. This gives us the ability to have private consultation rooms for youth oncology doctors and physicians to access and allow time for patients and their support to understand their treatment journey without the anxiety of rushing, scrambling and stressing the urgency of each and every minute situation and detail. This gives us private spaces for allied health team members to have difficult, confidential and confronting conversations without being overheard in an overrun, busy public waiting room. This gives us the space to provide specific personal dietary meals, sustenance, classes and facilities that can be utilised at any time day or night for growing, healing and rejuvenating depleted youth body systems. This gives us the access to treatment beds and chairs without multi-hour long waiting periods for clinical treatment or suppressed illnesses that can only be treated by youth specific oncological clinicians.

We are not looking for fancy trims and wall colours or wall to ceiling glamour, we just need a practical area that is safe, inviting, functional and durable for the decades to come with the inevitable rise of youth oncology patient numbers at the Sarcoma epicentre for Queensland.

Mr Nicholls, use the information I am providing to you not only to your advantage in your political party and alignment, but to the advantage of all Queensland communities who are relying on your decisions made 'above' our heads. Please do not hold this over us, let youth oncology patients reach up and beyond their diagnosis. Let us take advantage of the hope you can give us.

I hope I do obtain a form of response from yourself on this manner in a timely fashion; or alternatively you can contact me directly.

Kind regards,
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