

Fate deals Coast family deadly blow after blow

LIFE just is not fair sometimes.

Every day for the past six years, single father Terry Summersides has lived entirely for his daughter Fiona. For the past six months he has been by her side as she fought bouts of swine flu and pneumonia. Last Monday, surgeons amputated both of Fiona's legs 10cm below her knees because of the swine flu. Tomorrow, Mr Summersides begins his own battle against a cancer which will ultimately kill him.

OWEN JACQUES reports ...



STRUGGLING TO COPE: Fiona Summersides and her dad Terry in their Sunshine Coast home yesterday.

PHOTO: JOHN McCUTCHEON

TERRY Summersides has spent the past week desperately trying to find his daughter Fiona somewhere to live.

Fiona had both her legs amputated last week in the wake of a horrific battle against swine flu.

Tomorrow, Mr Summersides will begin a six-week course of intensive radio-chemotherapy.

He has already had all his teeth removed and will undergo a tracheotomy – a tube inserted into his throat and a feeding tube into his stomach.

The treatment means he will be unable to care for Fiona and there is no guarantee

he will even survive the chemo, so he is desperate to find her somewhere to live.

The family can no longer afford their rented Wurtulla home and Fiona needs to be close to Caloundra Hospital for rehabilitation.

“She still has to get through rehabilitation and try to walk and I’m going to have to move to Brisbane for radiation chemo.”

As Fiona relied on her dotting father during her traumatic battle with illness,

He was told it had been growing for up to three years but went unnoticed until a dentist referred him to a specialist for treatment of an ongoing toothache. That was two weeks ago.

On Monday last week – the

resting since she was released from hospital on Saturday and her father is weak and haggard as the cancer ravages his insides.

He has dropped 20kg in two months and now sounds more like an elderly man

me but you can see the pain in her eyes. I’d like to see her set up in a little townhouse near the hospital facility that she needs for the next 12 months.

“But she won’t have enough to pay the rent and get herself to rehab.

“What do I do?”

Mr Summersides said that even after his chemotherapy, he was “99% sure” that he would die next year.

“If it gives me six more months with my daughter and four or five of those are good, it will be worth it,” he said. “I’m begging to try and have something done so she doesn’t have to beg for herself.”

“She doesn’t cry in front of me but you can see the pain in her eyes. I’d like to see her set up in a little townhouse near the hospital that she needs for the next 12 months”.

– Terry Summersides

“I’ve got to get my daughter set up with a house,” a desperate Mr Summersides said. “I could be gone in five weeks or five months so I have to try.

neither of them realised there was a cancer growing inside his head. It began in his jawline and spread behind his ear and up the back of his skull.

same day Fiona’s legs were amputated – he had his teeth removed because the chemotherapy would cause them to crumble.

Fiona has been constantly

than a 51-year-old. “(Since her surgery) I have only been able to speak with her for five minutes at a time, I’m so tired,” he said.

“She doesn’t cry in front of

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