

A Time I Changed: How Cancer Changed My Life by Jariah Mosqueda



It started during the Easter holidays in 2021. I went camping with my cousin's family in Echuca, and we spent almost every day out on our mountain bikes. One afternoon, we found a massive jump. Trying to be the cool older cousin, I went for it. And crashed. Just a normal bike accident, or so I thought.

A few months later, in October 2021, I woke up with the worst pain I'd ever felt in the left side of my pelvis. My dad took me to the hospital, and after hours of waiting, they ran an X-ray and blood tests. They told us it was probably just growing pains or a pulled muscle or maybe musculoskeletal, so they sent us home that night.

But by 1 a.m., I couldn't even walk. The pain was unbearable. My dad rushed me back to the hospital, and this time, things moved fast. After more scans, I was transferred to Monash Children's Hospital in Clayton. I didn't know what was going on, but that's when the news was broken to my parents.

I was 11 years old when I was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a rare and aggressive bone cancer.

They had told me a week after I was admitted to the children's hospital. My oncologists said the trauma from the bike accident could've been the cause. The doctors said it was the size of a small football and half of the left side of my pelvis was gone from the cancer. That moment changed everything. Just a month earlier, we'd lost my grandpa to cancer. And now, I had it too. I saw my dad cry for the first time. Everything I knew about myself, school, my future, started to fall apart.

Chemo and radiation came next. The treatments were intense and exhausting. I lost a lot, not just my energy and strength, but the version of myself I thought was unbreakable. And yet, in that space of loss, I began to change. I changed my perspective of seeing life, and that's when I found music.

Music became everything. It got me through the nights I couldn't sleep, the days I spent alone in the hospital. Every single day, and every single night, I had music playing in my ears. My favourite artist of all time was Billie Eilish. One of the cancer foundations even gifted me tickets to her tour in 2022.

After finishing treatment in 2022, I held onto that feeling. In July 2024, I started making my own music, teaching myself how to produce and release music. A year later, in July 2025, I had taught myself how to write and record, so on the 3-year anniversary of finishing my cancer treatment, I released my first song with vocals, *made it*. It's raw, honest, and completely me. I just needed to speak the truth.

Cancer forced me to let go of who I thought I was and start becoming someone new. It taught me that healing isn't just about getting your body back, it's about rebuilding who you are, piece by piece, into someone stronger, more honest, and more alive.

I'm 15 now. I'm back at school. Music is and always will shape me as a person, and I'll never forget how much it helped and how much is meant to me. Surviving isn't about going back to who you were, it's about growing into who you're meant to be.