



Speech By  
**Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk**


**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2020

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### **Aged Care, End-of-Life and Palliative Care Inquiry; Voluntary Assisted Dying**

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): In November 2018, I asked the Parliamentary Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to inquire into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care, including voluntary assisted dying. The inquiry enabled Queenslanders to tell their personal stories and share their views. I want to thank the committee for its thorough and comprehensive consideration of these very important matters.

In March this year the committee tabled its report *Aged care, end-of-life and palliative care*, making 77 recommendations, and its report *Voluntary assisted dying*, making 21 recommendations. My government will table an interim response to both committee reports shortly.

It is absolutely critical that the government's final response to the committee reports is informed by the views and experiences of aged-care and palliative care providers. We need to give the sector and community time to consider the reports in detail and we know that the focus in these areas is currently on addressing the risk of COVID-19.

On the specific issue of voluntary assisted dying laws for Queensland, the committee recommended draft legislation as the basis for a legislative scheme in Queensland. This draft legislation aligns closely with the Victorian and Western Australian approaches, the only two Australian states to have enacted voluntary assisted dying schemes so far. However, voluntary assisted dying is a very complex and deeply personal issue in which competing interests and views of Queenslanders and experts have to be carefully balanced and the lives of our elderly and most vulnerable people protected.

There are also a number of operational issues to work through before we can implement any kind of voluntary assisted dying scheme in Queensland at this time. For these reasons, I believe law reform in this area requires further careful consideration. We did this for the Termination of Pregnancy Bill. I have therefore asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to refer the preparation of voluntary assisted dying legislation for Queensland to the Queensland Law Reform Commission. The Queensland Law Reform Commission will report back to the Attorney-General with draft legislation by 1 March next year for the government's final consideration.

The way in which our government responds to these recommendations about reform to aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying is critical to ensuring the protection of our most vulnerable members of the community. The provision of compassionate, high-quality and accessible palliative care for persons at their end of life is a fundamental right for the Queensland community. It is critical that we get this right. The government's proposed approach to the committee's reports is a measured and careful way to achieve this, informed by views of stakeholders and other experts in these fields.