

Sam O'CONNOR MP

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING SURVEY

Queensland Legislative Assembly
Number: 5211383
14 SEP 2021
MP: MR O'CONNOR MP
Clerk's Signature: *[Signature]*

Tabled
By Leave

102 Imperial Parade, Labrador, QLD 4215

5657 7980

bonney@parliament.qld.gov.au

Message from SAM about VAD

Voluntary Assisted Dying laws have been introduced to Parliament and will likely be voted on in September.

This is a really important issue and I want to make sure I hear from as many of the people I represent as possible. How I vote will be based on your views and my own values so the feedback you give me is really important.

The proposed laws aim to give people who are suffering and dying a choice over the timing and circumstance of ending their life. They must be terminally ill with 12 months or less to live and be in 'intolerable' pain to access this.

An important point is this is not a way to end life for those who are not medically determined to be dying.

The word choice is really important too; this proposes to give a very specific group of dying people the choice over their death.

I've summarised the proposed law inside, but if you have any questions please contact me on **5657 7980** or at **bonney@parliament.qld.gov.au**

I'm also going to run two public forums on the issue, the details are below.

On the inside you'll see a survey you can fill out and return to the office. It's free to post it back to me, just cut down the middle and fold the page with the reply paid panel on the outside. You can also scan the **QR code** and fill out the online survey if you find that easier.

If you'd like to have a conversation about the changes with me, please contact the office to book in a time.

I know this is going to be a sensitive issue for many people and we need to get these laws right, so please take the time to let me know what you think.



Sam O'Connor MP

Public Forums:



Sunday 8 August 2021

4:30pm | Labrador Senior Citizens Centre

Monday 9 August 2021

6:00pm | Arundel Tavern

These forums will be the chance to have to these proposed laws explained, to ask questions and to share your thoughts directly with me. Please rsvp to the office through the **QR code**, on **5657 7980** or at **bonney@parliament.qld.gov.au**. I'll also share it on my Facebook page so you can respond there. **It's important to register in case we have to make any changes with COVID!**



How VAD would work under the proposed legislation

1 Who is eligible?

Someone who:

- Has been diagnosed with a disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and is expected to cause death within 12 months. The disease must be causing suffering that the person considers to be intolerable; and they
- Are at least 18 years of age; and
- Have decision-making capacity; and
- Are acting voluntarily and without coercion; and
- Are an Australian Citizen; permanent resident; or have been residing here for at least 3 years immediately before the making the request; and
- Have been a resident of Queensland for at least 12 months immediately before they make the first request; or have been granted an exemption for either/both of these residency requirements.

2 What would the process be to access VAD?

- 1 The person makes the first request to a medical practitioner who assesses if they are eligible
- 2 They get a referral for a second independent assessment from another practitioner who also has to determine if the person is eligible for VAD
- 3 The person makes a second request in writing, signed in front of 2 independent witnesses (see below for definition)
- 4 The person makes a third and final request, it must be clear and unambiguous and made by the person directly (not someone on their behalf)
- 5 After the final request, if the first medical practitioner certifies the process has occurred as above, that the person has decision-making capacity and is acting voluntarily and without coercion, then the substance is prescribed and dispensed
- 6 A person can then choose to self-administer the substance, or have it administered by a health practitioner

3 What are the safeguards?

- A healthcare worker must not initiate the discussion of VAD as an option but they can raise it if they are also going through other treatment options and the likely outcomes of those. This includes raising palliative care options
- The person must be told, more than once, that they can decide at any time not to continue with VAD
- The second request is a written request that needs to be witnessed by two witnesses who will not benefit, or do not believe they will benefit, from the death of the person requesting. They also cannot be the owner or manager of the health facility at which the person is being treated, or one of the two doctors who approved the person for VAD
- A health practitioner who has a conscientious objection can refuse to participate in any part of the process but they are required to provide information to the person about other practitioners or services who may be able to assist with their enquiries about VAD

Have YOUR SAY on VAD laws



To return this survey, you can cut it off from the first page, fold it so the **reply paid panel** is on the outside and send it off via post, or you can take a picture of it and text it to **0416 944 486** or email **bonney@parliament.qld.gov.au**. If you'd like to complete the survey online, please scan the **QR code** which will take you to the survey on my website.

1. Your details

Name:

Street Number:

Street Name:

Suburb:

Postcode:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

2. Do you think voluntary assisted dying should be legalised?

YES NO

UNDECIDED

3. The proposed laws to legalise this in Queensland will allow for the following people to be eligible to choose to end their life. Please tick all that you AGREE with.

The person must:

Have a diagnosis of a disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and is expected to cause death within 12 months

Be at least 18 years of age

Have decision-making capacity

Be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or has been residing here for at least 3 years

Be a Queensland resident for at least 12 months immediately before making the request

4. If you didn't agree with one or more of the eligibility requirements, please detail your concerns here.

5. Do you think a terminal diagnosis of 12 months or less to live is the right timeframe?

YES

NO

It should be shorter than 12 months

It should be longer than 12 months

It should be another timeframe
(please specify how long you think) _____

6. Do you think the safeguards are adequate?

Do they do enough to protect all parties involved from this process being misused?

For example does the proposed system do enough to prevent someone being coerced into making the decision to choose the timing of their death?

YES NO

7. If no, what do you think is missing or needs to be strengthened?

8. The proposed laws allow medical practitioners to refuse to take part in the process if voluntary assisted dying does not accord with their values or beliefs (a conscientious objection) as long as they give the person requesting it the details of another practitioner who is likely able to assist them. Do you agree with this? Please share any thoughts you have.

YES NO

Authorised by

SAM O'CONNOR MP · Member for Bonney
102 Imperial Parade, Labrador, QLD 4216

Bonney Electorate Voluntary Assisted Dying Survey Results

Do you think voluntary assisted dying should be legalised?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	91.93%	1526
No	7.41%	123
Undecided	0.66%	11
	Answered	1660
	Skipped	4

The proposed laws to legalise this in Queensland will allow for the following people to be eligible to choose to end their life. Please tick all that you AGREE with. The person must:		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Have a diagnosis of a disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and is expected to cause death within 12 months.	91.23%	1414
Be at least 18 years of age	82.45%	1278
Have decision-making capacity	88.58%	1373
Be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or has been residing here for at least 3 years	74.26%	1151
Be a Queensland resident for at least 12 months immediately before making the request	63.35%	982
	Answered	1550
	Skipped	114

Do you think a terminal diagnosis of 12 months or less to live is the right timeframe?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	55.65%	911
No	15.88%	260
It should be shorter than 12 months	16.92%	277
It should be longer than 12 months	14.05%	230
It should be another timeframe (please specify how long you think)	15.70%	257
	Answered	1637
	Skipped	27

Do you think the safeguards are adequate? Do they do enough to protect all parties involved from this process being misused? For example does the proposed system do enough to prevent someone being coerced into making the decision to choose the timing of their death?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	88.53%	1443
No	11.47%	187
	Answered	1630
	Skipped	34

The proposed laws allow medical practitioners to refuse to take part in the process if voluntary assisted dying does not accord with their values or beliefs (a conscientious objection) as long as they give the person requesting it the details of another practitioner who is likely able to assist them. Do you agree with this? Please share any thoughts you have.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	90.35%	1488
No	7.35%	121
Other Comments	14.33%	236
	Answered	1647
	Skipped	17