

**Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021**

<b>Submission No.:</b>	249
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Fiona Dempster
<b>Publication:</b>	Making the submission and your name public
<b>Position:</b>	I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill
<b>Comments in relation to:</b>	Eligibility criteria* ,The request and assessment process,Administration of the substance,Safeguards,Conscientious objection by either individuals or entities,Oversight and review
<b>Attachments:</b>	No attachment

**Submitter Comments:**

I fully support the draft voluntary assisted dying law and wish to see it passed in the QLD Parliament. Eligibility: I support the eligibility conditions and believe they safeguard against the use of the legislation for conditions which are temporary and not likely to lead to death. I believe that choice should be provided for those who are in the process of dying and who wish to choose the time and circumstances of their death.

Request & Assessment Process: I think the request and assessment process are fair and enable a quick death (9 days) if that is the preferred outcome as well as many points along the way for re-consideration; and confirmation. I believe there would be value in having a list of practitioners who are willing to participate (or perhaps those that won't) in order to make sure that the person does not get held up by being forced to shop around for doctors, wait for appointments etc. The system of assessment needs to be as stress-free as possible for the participant and their care/support team. This will be particularly important in rural and regional areas where access to medical practitioners can be limited.

Administration of the substance: the choice to self-administer is an important one; as is the option to have a practitioner administer the substance.

Safeguards: I believe there are sufficient safeguards within the proposed legislation.

Conscientious objection: Whilst I support individual practitioners right to not participate; I believe it is important to make sure that those seeking assistance are made aware of this before they begin the process. Having come to the decision themselves to make use of the VDA laws; they should not have to accidentally run into walls of objections. There should be some way in which they can identify practitioners who do not conscientiously object so that they can approach them. This becomes critical in small country towns with only a few practitioners. I am concerned by the likelihood of entire entities conscientiously objecting and worry that may leave individuals in rural and regional areas with no opportunity to avail themselves of the VDA laws. There may need to be a supply of locum practitioners who can fly/drive to rural areas to undertake assessments (clearly you need two) or they need to be available via zoom or telehealth as other consultations are.

Oversight and Review: I support the establishment of an Oversight Board and believe the application the legislation should be reviewed annually in the first 5 years, and any necessary adjustments made.