

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 1122
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Position: I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill
Comments in relation to: The request and assessment process
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Voluntary Assisted Dying

Reasons for supporting VAD legislation

The QLD draft legislation allows for a person (with an incurable/terminal illness) to have a 12 months' life expectancy to be able to access VAD - in other states this is set at 6 months' life expectancy. We all know suffering starts BEFORE 6 months. We believe there should be no prognostic timeframes once you are diagnosed with a terminal/incurable disease. If there does have to be a timeframe then we support the 12 months' timeframe.

Telehealth/access: People in rural, regional areas should have equal access to VAD. The draft bill needs to address the current Commonwealth prohibition on using Telehealth to discuss Voluntary Assisted Dying (which is characterised in the Code as suicide). People who are dying are not well enough to travel miles to see a specialist or doctor.

Healthcare professionals - conscientious objection: We support the conscientious objection of individuals but we do NOT support "institutional conscientious objection": We don't believe "institutions" (hospitals) have the right to block VAD in their facilities when they are funded by the government. We believe the focus should be on the individual and not the individual having to find alternative hospitals that allow VAD when they are dying and at their most vulnerable and wish to access VAD.

We believe if someone lives in a nursing home or retirement village that is run by a religious institution - because it is that individual's "home" they should not be blocked from accessing VAD or doctors who might attend "their home" as part of the VAD process based on the ownership of the facility by a religious institution.