

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

**Submission No.:** 1246  
**Submitted by:** Tamerlan van Alphen  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Position:** I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill  
**Comments in relation to:** Eligibility criteria\* ,The request and assessment process  
**Attachments:** No attachment

**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee

I write in support of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill in its current form.

I also write to request that doctors be able to use electronic means to communicate with each other and their patients regarding VAD so that Queenslanders who live in remote areas have access to VAD.

People who own their own home in a retirement village - as my elderly step father does - must be able to access VAD in their own homes.

Everyone deserves the dignity of being able to determine the way their life ends, to have a peaceful and gentle death.

This issue impacts everyone - i know many of my friends have experienced the horrors of a painful end of life.

It's hard to talk about, but I'll share my story too.

A couple of years back I got a call that crashed my reality - mum was in hospital. No one knew what was wrong, but she was paralysed down her left side.

I will always remember mum's reaction when I got to her in st Vincent's. She was sobbing and scared. In a tiny sterile room I was bluntly told it was stage 4 brain cancer. I didn't know what that meant. A registrar explained that mum might have weeks, might have months. There was nothing that could be done. It was the loneliest most heartbreaking moment of my life.

They tried radiation to slow tumour growth, but it accelerated even more. Mum was desperate to get home, and it was a very long and hard journey to get her there, but we managed it. She wanted to die at home, and we tried to support that. The pain, the frustrations, the humiliations - she just wanted to have a clean bottom, she just wanted to be comfortable.

I can't go through everything that happened as it is too hard - but the doctor who had delivered me as a baby, got her into an amazing palliative care facility -with the best nurse I have ever met - Bec.

As mum entered the last weeks of her life, I just wanted her to be free from pain and comfortable. But despite every one's best efforts she wasn't. It was heartbreaking and horrible.

Every time she would break through consciousness she would cry.

The death rattle says it all really.

I will always be grateful for being with mum on the morning that she died. It was very early, so many birds were singing and by some miracle I woke up and was with her, her breath was ragged, painful gasps. I told her I loved her, and then she lifted off.

Mum never really accepted that she was dying because it all happened so quickly, and I therefore don't know if these important reforms would have helped her particular case.

But I know she would have wanted to have the freedom to choose.

I strongly believe that all Queenslanders deserve the right, and the dignity, to be able choose a gentle death and not go through the pain and suffering that my mum did.

I also strongly support the 12 month eligibility timeframe which should help ensure people who want VAD do not die before they can access it.

It is also critical that the implementation of the law, if passed, allows people who want to access VAD the ability to do it while their health is rapidly declining, and should avoid unnecessary delays in processing to ensure the intent of the legislation is achieved.

I urge the committee to support these VAD reforms