




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Voluntary Assisted Dying

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.44 am): I am pleased to rise today to support the Premier's announcement that voluntary assisted dying will be referred to the Queensland Law Reform Commission to draft legislation and provide to us next year. When we launched the parliamentary committee inquiry into end-of-life care, it was to look at how we can better provide for Queenslanders in their final days. That included aged care, palliative care and voluntary assisted dying. In considering the committee's hearings and report, it is clear that the Queensland community consider all three of these to be very important.

The Palaszczuk government has already made strengthening and expanding palliative care a priority. We know that Queensland's growing and ageing population combined with an increasing rate of chronic and life-limiting illnesses will see demand for palliative care services continue to grow. Queenslanders should have choice and control over how they spend their final days. Right now only around 10 per cent of Queenslanders who want to die at the home are able to do so. The Palaszczuk government wants to help people achieve that wish.

We have invested approximately \$114 million providing palliative care services and non-government organisations will receive a further \$9 million. We have boosted the funding provided to seven non-government palliative care organisations by \$10 million over the next four years. An additional \$17 million has also been provided to hospital and health services over two years to invest in community based palliative care services with the main aim of improving services in rural and regional areas.

We asked hospital and health services to champion projects that will help increase access to palliative care services in local communities and support Queenslanders to stay close to home and out of hospital at the end of their lives if that is what they wish. A substantial funding boost of almost \$500,000 over two years has also been given to Palliative Care Queensland to assist their statewide role as the peak body for palliative care services. We did not wait to invest in better palliative care and we will continue to do so while the Queensland Law Reform Commission considers voluntary assisted dying.