




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2021

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Traeger. There is an absolute lack of palliative care funding in many of Queensland's rural, regional and remote communities. If this government were serious with respect to the legislation that is before the House, there would be a universal service obligation—a mandated process within government—to ensure that many people in rural and remote communities across Queensland have access to multidisciplinary, evidence based care with respect to palliative care services, whether that be access to medical specialists who have palliative care training or to nurses or other health providers.

Whilst designated clinics cannot be provided in each and every community, they can be provided in centres to ensure that with the additional funding—the \$275 million which the Australian Medical Association, Palliative Care Queensland and other health organisations have been calling for—people in communities can get access to palliative care services. Providing that money would also allow for general practitioners and primary care providers in other communities to liaise with these units and people would get the best possible, evidence based palliative care regardless of where they live in Queensland—whether that is in remote Queensland, rural Queensland or regional Queensland.

As has been clearly articulated by the member for Traeger, there are many people who do not get access to these services. I was the president of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland back in 2006 and 2007 and I have spent a lot of my professional working life in rural communities. I can say that there are people there with terminal diseases who get no access to evidence based palliative care. It is a real tragedy, not only for the patients themselves but also for their families. They experience emotional trauma and additional physical and mental trauma in not being able to get access to this sort of care. It is simply not good enough in Queensland in the 21st century. An additional \$275 million would go a long way to rectifying this. That equates to about \$50 for every Queenslanders.

I say to the government: consider having a universal service obligation, a mandated process on government, to ensure that every Queenslanders—regardless of where they live, regardless of ethnicity, regardless of whether they are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, regardless of whether they live in remote, rural or regional Queensland—can have access to this. Professional organisations, the Australian Medical Association, the Rural Doctors Association, Palliative Care Queensland and communities are calling for this. I support the amendment moved by the member for Traeger.